TIPPOO SULTAUN.

VOL. II.

TIPPOO SULTAUN;

A TALE OF

THE MYSORE WAR.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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TIPPOO SULTAUN.

CHAPTER I.

GRADUALLY, however, all became more and more indifferent to these discomforts, and the few days which passed in the barracks, previous to their second embarkation, were as fully occupied as soldiers' time usually is when preparations for service, and that too of an active and spirit-stirring kind, are undertaken.

The close of the year 1782 had brought with it an event of the most important magnitude to the British interests in India. When Madras was in a state of famine, its treasury exhausted,

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and its means even of defence at the lowest ebb, Hyder Ali, the most formidable and untiring foe the English had ever known, constantly victorious over the ill-commanded armies of the southern Presidency, and holding a position which, in case of a successful blow early in the next campaign, would render him master of the field, died at Chittoor.

The relief which this event gave to the minds of the public functionaries in the south was great; and a blow, upon the army which had obeyed Hyder, might have been struck with advantage in the absence of any leader on whom it could have relied: that opportunity, however, was allowed to pass. Tippoo, the enterprising son of the deceased chief, was enabled to join it; and he assumed the command, and inheritance of his father's dominions, without opposition—nay, amidst the rejoicings of his future subjects. He had been employed in directing a successful opposition to the British invasion of his dominions from the westward, which had made much progress; and he had nearly succeeded in his object, when the news of his father's death was secretly conveyed to him.

In order now to establish his authority, it was absolutely necessary that he should cross the peninsula, and proceed at once to Chittoor, where his father had died, and where the army lay. This absence from his command, which was longer protracted than the invaders had calculated upon, gave them renewed courage, and the war against the Mysore dominions was prosecuted by the Bombay force with a vigour and success which had long been strangers to the operations of the English.

During the time which Tippoo necessarily consumed in consolidating his authority in the eastern part of his dominions, and providing for the invasion there menaced by the force of the Madras Presidency, the Bombay army, which had been driven by him into the fort of Paniané, had received reinforcements, and in return was enabled to beat back its assailants, and to advance with some success once more into the enemy's country, though from a more northern position, whither it had proceeded by sea. Before, however, any expedition of magnitude, or that promised a permanent occupation of the country, could

be undertaken from Merjee (now the position of the Bombay force) it was necessary that it should be reinforced largely—in fact reconstituted; and the opportune arrival of the large body of European troops, to which Herbert Compton and his companions belonged, enabled the Government to effect this in an efficient manner.

There were two ways also in which the dominions of Mysore could be assaulted; the one through the natural road, or gap, eastward from the town of Calicut, in the midst of which was situated the strong fort of Palghatcherry, and which led immediately into the rich provinces of Coimbatoor and Barah Mahal, bordering on the English possessions to the eastward; and another, by any one of the passes which led upwards from the level country between the Ghâts and the sea, into the kingdom of Mysore. The southern route had been often attempted; but from the difficulty of the road, the dense jungles, and the facility with which the invading forces could be met by the Mysore armies, attacks had never more than partially succeeded. It was hoped that, when once the army reached

the table-land above the mountains, it would not only hold a superior and commanding position for further operations towards the capital, in case of previous success, but it would possess the incalculable advantage of a cool and salubrious climate, of so much importance to the health, nay existence, of the European troops.

Accordingly, when it was known at Bombay that the force had been enabled to escape from the fort of Paniané, where, as we have mentioned, it had been beleagured by Tippoo in person—that it had sailed—relanded at Merjee, and was in condition to resume operations—it was determined that the whole of the disposable force, including the newly-arrived troops, should be sent to join it, and that operations should be commenced without delay.

Already prepared for active service, Herbert's regiment was one of the first which sailed again from the island: its complete equipment, and the health and spirit of the officers and men, led the Government to place every dependence on its exertions in the coming arduous contest. It was followed on the same day by others; and three or four days of delightful sailing

down the beautiful coast brought the armament to its desired haven, and the troops landed amidst the cheers and hearty welcome of their future brethren in arms.

A very few days served to make preparations for the campaign: bullocks and stores had already been collected, with a few elephants to assist the guns in their ascent of the passes; and, after the plans for the campaign had been determined by the leaders, Mathews, Macleod, Humberstone, and Shaw, the army moved from its camp toward its destination.

There was necessarily much of romance in the early campaigns in India: the country was unknown, and imagination peopled it with warlike races far different from the peaceable inhabitants of the coasts,—men in whom the pride of possession, of high rank, of wealth, of fierce bigotry and hatred of the Christians, uniting, made them no less the objects of curiosity, than worthy enemies of the gallant bands which sought them in war. Those who were new to the country, and who, in the close atmosphere and thick jungles of the coast, saw little to realize their dreams of eastern beauty, looked

to the wall of mountains spread out before them, with the utmost ardour of impatience to surmount them. Beyond them, they should see the splendour of Asiatic pomp, the palaces, the gardens, the luxuries, of which they had heard; beyond them, they should meet the foes they sought in the fair field; there, there was not only honour to be won, but riches—wealth unbounded, the sack of towns, the spoil of treasuries, which, if they might believe the reports diligently circulated throughout the army, only waited their coming to fall into their possession; above all, they burned to revenge the defeat and destruction of Baillie's detachment in the west, which was vaunted of by their enemies, and to retrieve the dishonour with which that defeat had tarnished the hitherto unsullied reputation of the British.

The spies brought them word that the passes were ill defended, that the rich city of Bednore with its surrounding territory was unprotected, that its governor, an officer of Tippoo's, and a forcibly-converted Hindoo, sought earnestly an opportunity to revenge his own dishonour, in

surrendering this the key of his master's dominions into the hands of his enemies. It is no wonder then, that urged on by cupidity, and inflamed by an ardent zeal to carry the instructions he had received into effect, the commander, Mathews, looked to the realization of his hopes with a certainty which shut out the necessity of securing himself against reverses, and hurried blindly on to what at first looked so brightly, but which soon clouded over, and led to the miserable fate of many.

It was a subject of painful anxiety to Herbert and his companions, so long as the destination of their regiment was unknown; for the army had to separate—part of it to reduce the forts and hold the country below the passes (a service which none of them liked in anticipation), and the other to press on through the open country to Bednore, the present object of their most ardent hopes. The strong fort of Honoor, however, which lay not far from their place of rendezvous, could not be passed; and to try the temper of the troops, and to strike terror into the country, it was assaulted and

carried by storm, with the spirit of men whom no common danger could appal, and who, in this their first enterprise, showed that they had only to be led with determination in order to perform prodigies of valour: nor was there any check given to their rapacity; the place was plundered, and thus their appetites were whetted both with blood and spoil for their ensuing service.

Now, indeed, shone out the true spirit of many a one whom Herbert and his companions had even respected hitherto; and they saw rapacity and lust possessing them, to the extinction of every moral feeling; while unbridled revelry, habitual disregard of temperance, and indulgence in excesses, hurried many to the grave whom even the bullet and the sword spared. They were thankful to be thus knit in those bonds of friendship which the conduct of their associates only drew the closer. They lived in the same tents, marched together, fought together, and found that many of their duties were lighter, and their marches and watches the shorter, for the companionship they had made for themselves.

The commander, Mathews, a man of deep religious feeling quite amounting to superstition, had early remarked the appearance of Philip Dalton; his high bearing, his steady conduct, the grave expression of his face, impressed him with a sense of his assimilation to himself in thought; and the excellent appearance of his men, and his attention to their comforts, with a high estimate of him as a soldier. Nor did Herbert escape his observation, nor the evident friendship which existed between them. On inquiry he found that both bore the highest character, though their habits of exclusiveness and hauteur were sneered at; yet, perceiving the cause, they rose the higher in his opinion on that account. For some time he weighed between the two; but gradually leaning to the side of Dalton, he at last determined to offer to him the post of aid-de-camp and secretary, which he accepted; and this, though productive of temporary separations between the friends, still gave them ample opportunities of association.

A few days after the storm and capture of Honoor, in which Herbert's regiment had borne a conspicuous part, and he, as com-

mander of the light company, had been noticed by the General in orders, the army reached the foot of the pass, above which the fort of Hussainghurry reared its head, and from which it took its name. Of the defences of the pass all were in fact ignorant; but the native spies had represented them as weak and easily to be surmounted, and they were implicitly believed. A few straggling parties of the enemy had been met with during the day, and driven up the pass, without any prisoners having been made from whom an idea of the opposition to be encountered could be gained or extorted. The way, however, lay before them; the army was in the highest spirits; and, though the only road discernible was a rugged path almost perpendicular, up the side of the immense mountain, yet to them there was nought to be dreaded,—the morrow would see them on the head of the ascent, breathing a purer air, with the broad plains of India before them, to march whither they listed.

It was night ere the army was safely encamped at the foot of the pass: the regiments had taken up their ground in the order they

were to ascend, and Herbert's company was in the van; upon it would rest, if not the fate of the day, at least the brunt of the ascent. Philip Dalton sought him after his duties were over, the final orders had been given, and the various officers had been warned for the performance of their several parts in the coming struggle.

"I am afraid you will have hot work to-morrow, Herbert," he said, as he entered his little tent, where sat his friend writing very earnestly. "I tried all I could to get the regiment another place, or at least to have the force march right in front, but it could not be done. Some how or other the General had more than ordinary confidence in the light company of the —th, and was pleased to express a very flattering opinion of my friend; so—"

"Make no apologies, dear Philip; all is as it should be—as I wish it; I would not have it otherwise for the world. My gallant fellows are ready for the fray, and you know they are not easily daunted; besides, what is there to be afraid of? the people we have seen as yet

have fled before us, panic-stricken, ever since the affair of Honoor, and I for one anticipate nothing but a pleasant walk up the mountain, or a scramble rather, for the road does not look over smooth."

"There will be hot work, nevertheless, Herbert; we have the best information as to the defences of the pass; they are insignificant, it is true, but every rock is a defence, and a shelter from whence the steady fire of these fellows may be fatal; and we hear of a scarped wall or something of the kind at the top, which we cannot very clearly make out. Would that I understood the language of the country, and could make inquiries myself; it appears to me that those who pretend to know it make but a lamentable hand of it, and guess at half they ought to know."

"It matters not, Philip—there is the road; we are to get to the top if we can. I presume no other orders will be necessary."

"None."

"Then trust me for the rest. I have a little memorandum here, which I was writing, and which, if you will wait with me for a while, I

will finish; it is only in case anything happens you know," he added gaily, "there are a few things I would wish to be done."

"I will not disturb you, so write on; I too had a similar errand,—ours is but an interchange of commissions."

"There, my few words are soon finished," said Herbert; "these are addressed to you, Philip, but they are to be opened in case only of accident; here are a few letters that I have written in my desk, which, with all my sketches, you must send home for me, or take with you if you go; for the rest, this will tell you fully all I wish to have done."

"It is safe with me, Herbert, if I am safe myself, of which I have small hope."

"Ah, so you said at Hoonoor; yet who exposed himself more, or fought better, nay hand to hand with some of the natives, than yourself? I shall use your own word destiny, and argue against you."

"Nevertheless, I am more impressed than ever with the certainty that I stand before you for the last time, Herbert. I shall not seek danger, however; indeed, my post near the

General precludes my doing so of my own accord; but in case of accident, here are my few memorandums; put them in your desk, where they can remain safely."

"And so now, having deposited our mutual last commands with each other, let us not think on the morrow, Philip, but as one in which we may win honour. If God wills it, we may meet when all is over and we are quietly encamped upon the top, and fight all our battles over again. I am glad, at all events, that I shall have Charles Balfour with me."

"Ah! how is that?"

"Why the picquets are ordered to join the advance guard, which is my company; he commands them today, and is yonder bivouacking under a tree, I believe; I was going to him when you came. Poor boy, I believe he is alone; will you come?"

"With all my heart."

They took their way through the busy camp, where numerous watch-fires were gleaming, and groups of native soldiery gathered round them, warming themselves from the cold night air and dew which was fast falling. The spot

on which the army rested was an open space at the very foot of the pass, surrounded by dense jungle, and mountains whose bulk appeared magnified by the dusk. Although the stars shone brightly, the fires which blazed around caused everything to appear dark, except in their immediate vicinity, where the light fell on many a swarthy group, among whom the rude hooka went its busy round, as they sat and discussed the chances of plunder on the morrow, or the events of the past day. Everywhere arose the busy hum of men, the careless laugh, the shout for a friend or comrade, many a profane oath and jest, and often the burden of a song to which a rude chorus was sung by others. The large mess-tent of the regiment, with its doors wide open, displayed by the glare within a group of choice spirits, who, over the bottle they could not forsake, fought their battles over again, coolly discussed the chances of promotion, and openly boasted of the plunder they had acquired, and their thirst for more. Herbert and his friend could almost guess from the gesticulations the nature of the conversation, and could see

that the men who held those orgies were drowning in wine the cares and thoughts which the events of the coming day might otherwise press on them. They turned away to where the watchful sentinels, placed double, native and European, paced upon their narrow walk, and where, around the embers of fires which had been lighted, the picquets lay wrapped in their coats, taking the rest which should fit them for the morrow's arduous strife.

"Who comes there?" challenged the nearest sentry, one of his own company.

"A friend—Captain Compton; do you know where Mr. Balfour is?"

"Yonder, sir; the officer of the native regiment is with him; they are sitting under the tree near yon fire."

Thither they proceeded—it was but a few steps off.

"Ah! this is kind of you, Herbert and Philip, to come to cheer my watch; not that it is lonely, for Mr. Wheeler here, who shares it with me, has a store of coffee and other matters very agreeable to discuss; but it was kind of

you to come to me; now be seated, camp fashion, upon the ground, and let us talk over the affairs of tomorrow; we are likely, it appears, to have some work."

"How do you know? have you any late news?" asked Philip.

"Mr. Wheeler can tell you better than I; but a short time ago the sentry yonder challenged in the direction of the pass, and, no answer being returned, I took a corporal's guard and made a little expedition, which was in some degree successful; for we caught two fellows who looked marvellously like spies, but who, on being interrogated by my friend here, swore lustily they were deserters, who had come to give information. From them we learned that at least twenty thousand of Tippoo's valiant troops were prepared to make this a second Thermopylæ, that we should have to storm intrenchments, and perform prodigies of valour, and that we might possibly get near the top; but as to surmounting it, that was out of the question: was it not so, Mr. Wheeler?"

"It was as you have said: these fellows were very likely put forward to give this news,

in order that we might be deterred from our attack, and thereby give them time to throw up some breastworks or stockades, at which they are expert enough. I fancy, however, the intelligence will have but little effect upon the General."

"What have you done with the prisoners? sent them to head-quarters, of course, Philip? I thought you must have seen them ere this."

"No, indeed, I have not; but it is time I should. I may be wanted too, and I must bid you farewell. If I can, I will be with you early; if not, and we are spared, we shall meet tomorrow on the summit. So once more, God bless you both!"

"God bless you! God bless you!" both repeated sincerely and affectionately, as they wrung his hand. It might be they should never meet again; but they were young, and soldiers, among whom such thoughts are seldom expressed, though they are often felt.

Herbert as yet had formed no acquaintance with the officers of the native army; taught by the tone prevalent among those of his own at that period, to consider them of a lower grade,

he was both surprised and gratified to find Mr. Wheeler a man of very general information. In particular he found him to be excellent authority on many matters connected with the usages and customs of the native troops, which to Herbert's military eye had appeared quite out of rule; and the sensible explanations he gave of these and many other circumstances, not only amused Herbert and his companion during their watch, but threw much light on the objects and chances of success in their undertaking.

"Then you think the General has considered the end without the means to accomplish what he has in view?" said Herbert, questioning him upon a remark he hazarded.

"I do; I think too (and the thought is not original, but one of high authority that I could mention, only it is discreet not to do so) that the Government is wrong in the precipitancy with which they have urged this on, and are injuring it daily. Our force is not sufficient to keep any country against Tippoo's whole army, which, whatever others may say of it, is in a very respectable state of discipline; and if we succeed in reaching Bednore, we shall hardly get out

of it with whole bones. Have we men to occupy the passes, to take forts, to secure the country, and to fight Tippoo besides?"

"We have little force enough certainly," said Herbert; "but then most are Europeans."

"Ay, but they are difficult to support, and helpless if not supported; it is the fashion for you gentlemen of the royal army to cry down our poor fellows, who after all fight well and do all the drudgery. We may never meet again, Captain Herbert, but you will remember the words of a poor Sub of native infantry, who, because he knows more of the native character than your General, and more of the country, is very much disposed to prophecy a disastrous end to what is just now very brilliant."

"I hope you are wrong; nevertheless what is chalked out for us we must do; we ought to have no opinions but those of our superiors."

"Ah well! that is an acmé of discipline to which I fear we shall never attain," said the lieutenant laughing. "I, for one, am willing to play my part in what is before us; for I am too inured by this time to hard blows and desultory fighting, to care much for the passage of a ghât,

where, after all, the resistance to be apprehended may only be from a few fellows behind a wall with rusty matchlocks."

"You are right, Mr. Wheeler," said young Balfour; "I want to see my good fellows show the army the way to get up a hill; you, Herbert, will answer for their doing the thing in style."

"I can, Charles; but remember you are not to be rash; as your superior officer, I shall beg of you to use discretion with your valour. Do I not advise well, Mr. Wheeler?"

"You do indeed, sir; I wish many higher than you in rank could think as calmly while they act as bravely. But here comes the field-officer of the night; we must be on the alert, Mr. Balfour. Good night, Captain Compton! we may renew this acquaintance."

"I shall be delighted to do so whenever you please; you know where to find me, in the lines of the —th; I am seldom absent. And now, dear Charles, tell me before you go if I can do anything for you, in case of accident tomorrow? Dalton and I have exchanged little memorandums, which I felt to be necessary, as we are to bear the brunt of the business."

"Ah, there is really no danger, Herbert: you see Mr. Wheeler says there is none; besides—"

"Do not say so, Charles; wherever bullets are flying, there is danger. I do not mean—God forbid I should think of any danger to you,—but it is our duty to consider such matters, that we may be able to meet them calmly."

"You are right, you are right, dear Herbert; I am glad you have spoken to me, for I dared not have mentioned it to you or Dalton. But in case I am—in case, you know, of any accident—you will write home about me, Herbert. You will find the direction pasted inside my desk—to my—my—mother—"

Poor boy! the sudden thought of her, linked with that of his own possible death, was too much for a heart overflowing with affection for his only parent. He struggled for awhile with his feelings, and then, able to control them no longer, burst into tears.

Herbert did not check them. It was but for a moment however; he quickly rallied. "This is a weakness which I little thought to have displayed, Herbert; but just then my thoughts

were too much for me. Will you do what I asked?"

"That will I most cheerfully, if I live, Charles."

"And just tell them," he continued gaily, "what sort of a fellow I have been. It will be a comfort for them to know perhaps that—but enough!—you know all. Wheeler has got his men ready, and yonder are the rounds: so good night! tomorrow we spend for a time, at all events, in company. I am glad you spoke to me,—I feel all the lighter for it already."

"Good night, Charles! get some rest if you can after the rounds are past, you will need it, and all appears safe and quiet now around us."

Herbert slowly returned towards his tent, picking his way amidst the prostrate forms of the native followers, which everywhere covered the ground, wrapped in deep sleep. All was now still, except the spot he had left, where the usual words of the guards challenging the rounds arose shrill and clear upon the night air; and the "Pass Grand Round—all is well!" gave a sense of security, which, in the midst of a

watchful enemy's country, was doubly acceptable. Once he thought, as he listened, that the challenge was answered from the pass by the shrill and quivering blast of the brass horn of the country; and he looked, lest there should be any stir discernible. But all was still; the giant form of the mountain apparently slept in the calm night air; a few mists were wreathing themselves about its summit, which was sharply defined against the deep blue sky glistening with stars; and here and there the bright twinkle of a distant watch-fire far above him showed that the enemy kept their watch too as carefully as their assailants.

The camp was quite hushed; here and there the sharp bark of a dog arose, but was as instantly silenced; or the screams and howlings of a pack of jackals, as they prowled about the outskirts of the camp in search of offal, awoke the echoes of the mountains. The drowsy tinklings of the cattle-bells, with their varied tones, and the shrill chirrupings of innumerable grasshoppers, were sounds which never ceased; but they were peaceful, and invited that repose which all needed and were enjoying.

CHAPTER II.

Long ere the morning's dawn had broken, the bugle's cheerful note had sounded the reveillé; from the head-quarter tents the first blast arose, and its prolonged echoes rang through the mountains—now retiring far away among the dense woods—now returning and swelling upon the ear more near and more distinct than it had been at first. One by one the regiments took it up, and were followed by their drums and fifes, making the solitudes, which hitherto had known only the growl of the bear, the shrieking howl of the hyæna, or the bellow of the wild bison, resound with the inspiring and martial sounds.

Soon all were prepared; the regiments fell

into the various places allotted to them; the light artillery, to which were harnessed the strongest and most active bullocks—each piece having an elephant behind to urge it over the roughest or most inaccessible places—brought up the rear. Each man was as lightly equipped as possible, that he might not be distressed by climbing; and, as a last order, might be heard the words "Fix Bayonets, with cartridge prime and load!" pass from regiment to regiment, succeeded by the rattling of the muskets and jingling sound of ramrods, as each sent home the ball which he firmly hoped might in its discharge bear with it the life of one of his enemies.

Herbert and his young friend Balfour had long been ready, and waiting for the signal to advance at the head of the column; their men were impatient, and their blood was chilled with the long detention which the preparation of so large a body necessarily occasioned. They were standing around a fire which one of the men had kindled with some dry leaves and sticks gathered from the adjacent thickets. All about them was obscure; for the thick vapour

which had wreathed itself about the mountain-tops early in the night, had now descended, and occupied the whole of the narrow valleys in dense volumes, so that nothing could be seen beyond their immediate vicinity: they could only hear the bugle-sounds, as they arose one by one, and the measured tramp of many feet as the corps moved to take up their various positions.

"This is very tiresome, Herbert," said Balfour; "I wish we were off. I think we could do much under cover of this darkness; we might surprise the fellows above, and be at the top before they knew what we were about."

"I rather think we shall wait for daylight; but what is your opinion, Mr. Wheeler?" he said to the young man who had just joined them.

"I think with you. The General most likely has heard that this fog will rise with the daylight, and screen us half way up, perhaps better than the night; but here is Captain Dalton, who looks as if he had orders for the advanced guard."

"Where is your Captain?" they heard him

ask of one of the sergeants; "I have orders for him."

"Yonder, sir," replied the man, whose concluding words were unheeded in the cry of "Here, here, by the fire!" which arose from the trio around it.

"Well, Philip, are we to move on? I suppose there will be no signal?" asked Herbert, as Dalton rode up.

"Not yet, not yet: we are to wait till daylight," returned the other: "the fellows who came in last night have offered to lead up two detachments, so that the whole force can advance and the columns support each other."

"That is well, so far; but we are still to have the main path, I hope."

"Oh yes, and the native company will lead the other—yours perhaps, Mr. Wheeler."

"Yes, mine; and I am glad to hear it. Now Captain Compton we have a fair chance; natives against Englishmen in fair emulation."

"Ah, here are the fellows! Will you take charge of one, Herbert? and you, Mr. Wheeler, of the other? If either of you find they have led you wrong, you are at liberty to shoot them upon the spot. Will you explain that fully to

them, if you please?—though indeed they ought to know it pretty well already. And now good bye, boys, and good success to ye all! the —th never yet yielded, and you have the post of honour today—so remember!"

These few words were received with a hearty shout by the sections around, and Dalton departed to deliver the other commands with which he was charged.

The short time which elapsed before the signal for advance was passed by Herbert and his companions in examination of the men who were to lead them.

With very different feelings had these men sought the English camp. The one a Nair, a Hindoo of high birth, forcibly converted to the religion of Mahomedanism, burned for an opportunity of revenge. The other, a Mahomedan—a fellow in whose heart grew and flourished every base passion, more particularly that of gain, which had led him to proffer his services to the English commander for gold.

They had both been promised reward, which, while the one indignantly scorned, the other bargained for with the rapacity of his nature

the one was willing to hazard his life for his revenge, the other for the gold which had been promised. How different was to be the fate of the two!

Now in the presence of the two young English leaders, both were confronted and examined. The young Nair, a fellow of high and haughty bearing, ill brooked the searching and suspicious questions of the English officer; but he gave, nevertheless, clear and distinct information about the road, free from every taint of suspicion.

"What is to be thy reward?" asked Wheeler at last.

"My revenge for the insult upon my faith. I was a Nair once, yet am now a vile Mussulman. I need say no more, and it concerns thee not."

"Thou art haughty enough, methinks," returned his questioner.

"As thyself," was his only reply.

"By Jove he is a fine fellow!" said Herbert, who guessed at the conversation; "let me have him with me."

"As you will. Now let us see what account

the other can give of himself. What is to be thy reward, good fellow?"

"I was promised two hundred rupees for this service. My lord will surely see his slave gets the money?"

"That depends upon thy conduct: if thou art false, I swear to thee I will shoot thee like a dog. I like not thy face."

"Your slave's life is in your hands—may I be your sacrifice this moment!—I will lead you safely; ask him yonder whether I will or no."

"I cannot answer for him," said the Nair haughtily; "he guides you for gain: give me the post of danger. I know he is a coward at heart; let him take the back way, he will show it for fear of his life: I will fight for my revenge."

"So be it then, Captain Compton; as yours is the main column, take you the best man. I leave you my orderly, who speaks enough English to interpret a little between you and your guide. And now to our posts, for the day dawns, I suspect."

"How?"

"Did you not feel a breath of wind? That

tells us that the new day has awakened; you will soon hear the bugle."

Nor did they wait long. The long-expected sound arose from the centre of the force; it was answered by the others in front and rear; and the column, like a huge snake, began its steep and tortuous ascent in perfect silence.

Herbert had received orders not to hurry, and with some difficulty restrained the ardour of his men, and the impatience of his young friend, who, with himself, was with the leading section of the advance. Long they climbed up the narrow and rugged pass, which, though a rough one, possessed the form of a road, and as yet no obstacle had been met with. The mist still hung upon the mountain; but the gentle wind which had arisen was swaying it to and fro, causing it to wheel in eddies about them; and the now increasing light showed them the track, and gave them glimpses of the deep and precipitous ravines, upon the very edges of which they were proceeding, —giddy depths, into which the eye strove to penetrate, but filled with the whirling mists, which, though in motion, had not yet arisen.

For nearly an hour did they proceed thus slowly, in order that the rear corps might fully support them; and they could hear the steps of the column on their right marching parallel with themselves at no great distance among the forest trees. At length the head of the column approached a rock, which formed an acute angle with the road. Motioning with his hand for them to advance slowly, the young Nair drew his sword and ran lightly on. They saw him crouch down and disappear.

"He will betray us!" cried Balfour; "on—after him!" And he would have obeyed the impulse of his ardour but for his captain.

"Be still an instant, I will answer for his fidelity," exclaimed Herbert. He had hardly spoken, ere the young man was seen again, waving his sword.

"Now, my lads, follow me!" cried Herbert, dashing forward. "Promotion to the first who enters the defences!"

Ere the enemy could hear the cheer which followed these words, their assailants were upon them. Turning the angle, they beheld a wall of strong masonry, with loop-holes for musketry,

one side of which was built against a precipitous rock—the other open. One or two matchlocks were discharged ineffectually from the rampart, but this was no check to them: hurrying on, they crowded through the side-opening, where they were met by a few determined fellows, who opposed them for an instant. Vain endeavour! The deadly bayonet was doing its work; and a few slight sword-cuts only served to inflame those who received them to more deadly revenge. The Nair fought nobly. Cheered on by the soldiers, who took delight in his prowess, he threw himself headlong upon several of the defenders of the place in succession; and, though he too was slightly wounded, yet his deeply-planted sword-cuts told the strength of arm which inflicted them, and the deep hate and revenge which urged him on.

Now, indeed, ensued a scene of excitement and spirited exertion difficult to describe. The few musket-shots which had been fired, proved to those in the rear that the work had begun in earnest, and every one now strove to be the first to mingle in it. The column pressed on, disregarding order and formation, which indeed

was little necessary, but which was preserved by the officers as far as possible. The gallant Macleod was soon with the leading sections, animating the men by his gestures and his cheers. They needed not this however, for Herbert was there, and young Balfour, who emulated his example; and all hurried after the fugitives, from ascent to ascent, with various effect. Now one of their number would fall by a shot—now one of the Europeans, as the retreating enemy turned and fired. Now a wreath of smoke would burst from among the bushes and crags above them, and the bullets would sing harmlessly over their heads, or rattle among the stones around them:—again this would be answered by the steady fire of a section, which was given ere the men rushed forward with the more sure and deadly bayonet.

Herbert and his men, guided by the Nair, still fought on in the front, toiling up many a steep ascent: one by one the works which guarded them were carried; and, though in many cases obstinately disputed for a few moments, yet eventually abandoned—their defenders, panic-stricken, hurried after the horde

of fugitives which now pressed up the pass before them.

At length a steeper acclivity appeared in view, the sides of which were lined with a more numerous body of men than had hitherto been seen; and the sun, which now broke over the mountain's brow for the first time, glanced from their steel spears and bright musket-barrels.

"Let us take breath for a moment," cried Macleod, "and do all of ye load; there will be tough work yonder—the last, if I mistake not, of this affair. The enemy has mustered his strength, and awaits our coming: we are within shot, yet they do not fire. You have behaved nobly, Captain Herbert, and your guide is a gallant fellow. Mr. Balfour too seems to have had his share, as appears by his sword. But come, we are enough together now, and the rest are pressing on us. Follow me, gentlemen, for the honour of Scotland!"

Waving his sword above his head, which flashed brightly in the sunlight, he dashed on, followed by the Nair and the others, upon whom the momentary rest had had a good effect. Their aim was more deadly, their footsteps firmer and more rapid.

Urged on by his impetuosity, the gallant Colonel did not heed the motions of the Nair, who, fatigued by his exertions, vainly strove to keep pace with the commander. He hurried on, followed by nearly the whole of Herbert's company and the young Balfour, up the broad ascent which invited their progress, but which it was apparent, from the position of the defenders, would be hotly contested. It was in vain that the Nair stormed, nay raved, in his own tongue: who heeded him? or if they did, who understood him?

"There is no road, there is no road there!" he cried. "Ah fools, ye will be lost if ye persevere! Follow me! I will lead ye—I know the way!"

Fortunately at that moment Herbert happened to cast his eyes behind him. He had missed the young Nair with the advance, and had thought he was killed: he now saw his gesticulations, and that the orderly was beside him. A sudden thought flashed upon him that there was no road, from the confidence with which the attacking party was about to be received; and hurrying back to them, he eagerly demanded the cause of his cries.

"No road there!" "no road!" "he know the road!" "he show the road!" was the answer he got through the orderly. But to turn any portion of his men, who heard nothing and saw nothing but the fierce contest which had begun only a few paces above them, was a matter of no small difficulty: a steady sergeant or two of a different regiment and some of his own men at last saw his intentions; and, with their aid, he found himself at the head of a small body, which was being increased every instant.

The Nair surveyed them half doubtfully: "they will be enough!" he said in his own tongue, and dashed down a narrow path which led from the main road.

Following this in breathless haste for a few moments, and in fearful anxiety lest he should be betrayed, Herbert called to the men to keep together; and as they began again to ascend, he saw the nature of the Nair's movement. The wall, which was being attacked by the main body, was built on one side up to a steep precipice, the edge of a fearful chasm; on the other to a large and high rock of great extent, which flanked the wall and defied assault from the

front, but could evidently be turned by the path by which they were now proceeding. How his heart bounded with joy therefore, when, after a few moments of hard climbing, he found himself, with a greater number of men than he had expected, on the top of the rock within the enemy's position!

Pausing for an instant to take breath, he saw the desperate but unavailing struggle which was going on below him, in the vain attempts being made by the troops to scale the wall. What could they do against a high wall, with a precipitous rock on either hand, and a murderous fire in front? many had fallen, and others fell as he looked on. He could bear it no longer; he had scarcely fifty men with him,—in the redoubt were hundreds. "Give them one steady volley, boys!" he cried to his men. "Wait for the word—Fire!—Now on them with the steel!"

Secure in their position, the enemy little expected this discharge, by which some dozen of their number fell; and as they cast a hurried glance up to the rock, it was plain by their great consternation how admirably had the surprise been effected. Numbers in an instant

threw away their arms and betook themselves to flight, while others, irresolute, hesitated. The British below soon saw their comrades above, and saluted them with a hearty cheer, while they redoubled their efforts to get over the wall; in this there was a sally-port; and, as the small party dashed down into the enclosure amidst the confusion and hand-to-hand conflict which ensued, one of them contrived to open it. Eagerly the assailants rushed in, and few of those who remained asked or received quarter.

Herbert's eye was fascinated, however, by the Nair, his guide, who from the first descent from the rock had singled out one of the defenders of the redoubt, evidently a man of some rank. He saw him rush upon him waving his reddened sword;—he saw the other defend himself gallantly against the attack;—even the soldiers paused to see the issue of the contest. The Nair was not fresh, but he was reckless, and pressed his opponent so hard that he retired, though slowly, along the rampart. Their shields showed where many a desperate cut was caught, and both were bleeding from

slight wounds. By degrees they approached the platform of the precipice, beyond which was only a blue depth, an abyss which made the brain giddy to look on. Ere they were aware of it, the combatants, urging their utmost fury, and apparently not heeding their situation, approached the edge, exchanging cuts with redoubled violence; and now one, now the other, reeled under the blows.

On a sudden Herbert saw—and as he saw it he sprang forward, with many others, to prevent the consequences they feared—the chief, who had his back to the edge, turn round and look at his position. The next instant his sword and shield were thrown away, he had drawn a dagger from his girdle and rushed upon the Nair his adversary. A desperate struggle ensued; they saw the fatal use made of the knife; but still the Nair, dropping his sword, struggled fiercely on. As they approached the edge the suspense became fearful, for no one dared venture near the combatants: in another instant they tottered on the brink, still struggling;—another—and a portion of the earth gave way under their feet, and they fell! They

saw for an instant a hand grasp a twig which projected,—that disappeared, and they were gone for ever! Herbert and many others rushed to the spot, and, shading their eyes, looked over the precipice; they saw them descending, bounding from every jutting pinnacle of rock, till their aching sight could follow them no longer.

"It was a deadly hate which must have prompted that man's exertions this day," said a voice beside him, as Herbert turned away sickened from the spot—it was Philip Dalton.

"May that Being into whose presence he has gone be merciful to him!" said Herbert; "for he has fought well and bravely today, and guided us faithfully: without his aid, who could have discovered the narrow path by which I was enabled to turn this position?"

"You, Herbert? I thought it must be you, when I heard how it had been done. I envy you, while I admire your courage: you have saved the army: we should have lost many men at that wall but for your well-timed diversion."

"Then you saw it?"

"I did; I was with the General, down there,

when the welcome red-coats appeared on the rock yonder; he hailed your appearance like that of an angel deliverer, and exclaimed that Heaven had sent you."

"Not Heaven, Philip, but the poor fellow who lies in yonder chasm. I would to Heaven he had lived!"

"Do not think of him, Herbert, but as one who has fought nobly and died bravely—an honourable end at any time: but have you seen Charles Balfour?"

"He was with me, surely," said Herbert; "but no, now that I remember, I think he went on with the Colonel and the rest. Good God! he must have been in all that hot work: you saw nothing of him as you passed the sally-port?"

"No, but let us go and look; the bugles are sounding a halt, and you have done enough today; so trouble yourself no further; we have gained the ascent, and the enemy is flying in all directions."

As they spoke, they passed through the sally-port into the open space beyond; where many a poor fellow lay writhing in his death-agony, vainly crying for water, which was not imme-

diately to be found. Many men of Herbert's own company, faces familiar to him from long companionship, lay now blue and cold in death, their glazed and open eyes turned upwards to the bright sun, which to them shone no longer. His favourite sergeant in particular attracted his notice, who was vainly endeavouring to raise himself up to breathe, on account of the blood which nearly choked him.

"I am sorry to see this, Sadler," said Herbert kindly, as he seated him upright.

"Do not think of me, sir," said the poor fellow; "Mr. Balfour is badly hurt. I was with him till I received the shot, but they have taken him yonder behind the rock."

"Then I must leave you, and will send some one to you;" and Herbert and Dalton hurried on.

Behind the rock, almost on the brink of the precipice, and below the wall, there was a shady place, formed by the rock itself and by the spreading branches of a Peepul-tree which rustled gently over it. This served for a kind of hospital; and the surgeons of the force, as one by one they came up, lent their aid to dress the wounds of such as offered themselves.

There, supported by two men of his company, and reclining upon the ground with such props as could be hastily arranged around him, lay Charles Balfour—his fair and handsome features disfigured by a gaping wound in his cheek, and wearing the ghastly colour and pinched expression which is ever attendant upon mortal gun-shot wounds. Both saw at once that there was no hope; but he was still alive, and, as he heard footsteps approaching, his dim and already glazed eye turned to meet the sound, and a faint smile passed over his countenance, evidently of recognition of his companions. They knelt down by him gently, and each took the hand he offered.

"I thought"—he said with much difficulty and very faintly—"I thought I should have died without seeing you; and I am thankful, so thankful that you have come! Now, I go in peace. A few moments more, and I shall see you and this bright earth and sky no more. You will write, Herbert, to—to—" He could not say—mother.

"I will, I will do all you say, dear Charles; now do not speak—it hurts you."

"No, it does not pain me; but I am dying,

Herbert, and all is fast becoming dim and cold. It is pleasant to talk to you while life lasts. You will tell her that I died fighting like a man—that no one passed me in the struggle, not even yourself."

Herbert could not answer, but he pressed his hand warmly.

"Thank you, thank you. Now pray for me! —both of you; I will pray too myself."

Reverently they removed their caps from their brows, and, as they knelt by him, offered up in fervency prayers, unstudied perhaps and even incoherent, but gushing fresh from the purest springs of their hearts, and with the wide and glorious scene which was spread out before them for their temple. As they still prayed in silence, each felt a tremulous shiver of the hand they held in theirs; they looked upon the sufferer: a slight convulsion passed across his face—it was not repeated—he was dead!

Both were brave soldiers; both had borne honourable parts in that day's fight; yet now, as their eyes met, overcome by their emotions, both wept. Herbert passionately; for his mind had been worked up to a pitch of excitement

which, when it found vent at all, was not to be repressed. But after awhile he arose, and found Dalton looking out over the magnificent prospect; the tears were glistening in his eyes it was true, but there was an expression of hope upon his manly features, which showed that he thought Charles's change had been for the better.

They stood almost upon the verge of the precipice; far, far below them was a giddy depth, the sides of which were clothed with wood, and were blue from extreme distance. Mountains of every strange and varied form, whose naked tops displayed bright hues of colour, rose in their precipices out of eternal forests, and formed combinations of beautiful forms not to be expressed by words—now gracefully sweeping down into endless successions of valleys, now presenting a bold and rugged outline, or a flat top with perpendicular sides of two or three thousand feet, which descended into some gloomy depth, where a streamlet might be seen chafing in its headlong course, though its roar was not even heard. There were many scathed and shattered peaks, the remains of former convulsions, which, rearing themselves above, and

surrounded by mist, looked like a craggy island in a sea; and again beyond, the vapours had arisen in parts and floated gracefully along upon the mountain side, disclosing glimpses of blue and indistinct distance to which the mind could hardly penetrate—a sea of mountains of all forms, of all hues, blended together in one majestic whole, and glowing under the fervent light of the brilliant sun; and they looked forth over this with hearts softened from the pride of conquest, more fitted to behold it, to drink in its exquisite beauty, from the scene they had just witnessed, than if in the exultation of victory they had gazed upon it from the rock above.

"Methinks it would take from the bitterness of death," said Herbert, "to part from life amidst such scenery, which of itself creates an involuntary wish to rise above the earth, to behold and commune with the author and creator of it; and if the taste of this, which we are permitted here, be so exquisite, what will be the fullness of reality? Poor Charles! his fate was early and unlooked for; yet with his pure spirit, in the hour of conquest, and here,

without pain too, we may well think there was bitterness in his death."

"There is never bitterness in death, if we look at it steadily, Herbert, and consider it as a change to an existence far more glorious. Charles has passed away from us,—the first of our little company, in this strange and gorgeous land,—perhaps not the last; but come, we may be wanted."

And saying this, they turned from the spot, giving a few necessary orders for the care of the body of their friend; and with some cheering words to the poor wounded fellows, who were brought in every moment, they passed on to the other duties which required their presence.

CHAPTER IV.

On the summit of the Hussainghurry pass, if the traveller turns aside from the beaten track into the thin brushwood to the left and near the edge of the mountain, from whence he will behold an indescribably sublime prospect, there are a few ruined tombs. They are those of the officers and men who fell in the assault, and who lie near the scene of their triumph, sad yet honourable memorials of the event which even now is sung and described by the bards of the country in rude but expressive language.

Beyond these again is another, beneath a shady Neem-tree, which is in better preservation, and, by the hut near it, has evidently been taken under the care of an old Fakeer. He

will always supply the thirsty traveller with a cup of cool water after his weary ascent, and though he could originally have had no interest in the tomb, has yet inherited the occupation of the spot from others before him, whom either death swept from the face of the earth, or, having rested there for awhile, have wandered into other and far distant lands.

That tomb is Charles Balfour's; and whether it is that more than ordinary interest existed at the period in the fate of him who lies there, —whether any tradition of his youth and virtues descended with time—from its being apart from the others, or from the shade the tree afforded—that it has been selected from the rest, and held in sanctity,—we know not; yet so it is. Annually, a few flowers and a lighted lamp are offered up upon it, and often a love-sick maiden, or a mother beseeching health for her child or a propitious return to her absent husband, brings a lamp and a garland with her, and in a few simple prayers beseeches the spirit of him who rests there to aid her requests.

Certain it is they could not pray to the spirit

of a purer being; and if the act itself be questionable, at least we cannot refuse, to the emotion which prompts it, our mental tribute of sincere sympathy.

Herbert and Dalton selected the spot themselves; and in the evening, after they had completed the few necessary preparations for the funeral, as the red glow of the declining sun was lingering upon the mountain-peaks, gilding the naked precipices till they shone like fire, and the huge mountains were flinging their purple shadows over the deep valleys and chasms, making their depths even more profound and gloomy,—the slow and sad funereal train which bore Charles Balfour to his grave issued from the camp, followed by most of the officers in the force and the men of his regiment; for the youngest officer in it had been a favourite with all, and his daring bravery on that day had caused a double regret for his early fate.

What more affecting sight exists than a soldier's funeral? the cap and sword, and belt and gloves upon the coffin, speak to the heart more than studied eulogy or the pomp of nodding

plumes and silent mutes; the head which proudly bore the one, the arm which wielded the other, are stiff and cold. Earth has claimed her own; and it goes to its last narrow resting-place, not in the triumphal procession of hearses and lines of carriages, but with the solemn wail of the music for the dead, and with slow and measured tramp, so full of contrast to the vigorous and decisive step of military movement.

The mournful procession passed onward till it reached the grave; the funeral party which preceded the coffin performed its simple movement in silence; and as the lane was formed, and the men bowed their heads upon the butts of their muskets, many a big tear could be seen coursing down the cheeks of those who had fought beside him who had passed from among them for ever!

Soon all was finished: the rattle of musketry resounded in the still evening through the mountains; it died gradually away; again and again it was repeated; and the last honours being paid to their departed brother, all separated, and returned in groups to the camp, soon to forget, even amidst other excitements

than those of action or constant service, the solemnity of the scene they had been engaged in.

Philip and Herbert remained however till the grave was filled in and stones and thorns were piled upon it; and by this time evening had far advanced, and spread her dusky mantle over the sublime scenery. All beyond the pass gradually became a dark void, wherein nothing was discernible save here and there a dim twinkling light, which showed where a shepherd kept his watch, or a few wood-cutters cooked their evening meal after the labours of the day. They could not remain long; the chill breeze which arose as night advanced, though it was pleasant to their relaxed frames, warned them to retire to the shelter of their tent; and if their evening there was spent sadly, at least they had the satisfaction of thinking that all the honours of a soldier's death had been shown to their young friend, and that he lay in a grave which would be unmolested for ever.

It is far from our intention to follow *seriatim* the operations of this campaign, which are already matters of history, except as they are necessary to the explanation of the positions

into which the fate of Herbert Compton led him. It has been already stated that the rich town of Bednore, the capital of the province in which the army now was, had been from the first the object of the present campaign; accordingly Mathews, the day after the assault of the pass, pressed onwards with his whole force to Hyderghur, a strong fort on the way to Bednore. This place quickly yielded; and the governor, having been offered terms by the English commander, agreed to them, and delivered over the whole of the districts dependent upon the fortress. The fortress of Anantpoor soon followed, and the country was quickly occupied by small detachments, and the inhabitants yielded apparently quiet possession to their conquerors. Bednore was next approached; and as the minarets and white-terraced houses appeared to the view of the army, and it was known that its governor had deserted his post, all were clamorous to be led at once against it, both because it was to be their resting-place, after their fatiguing service, and was described to be full of treasure, which would become their lawful spoil.

The possession of it was the more urgent,

because only six rounds of ammunition remained to each man in the whole army; with this miserable provision, no operation of any magnitude could be undertaken; there was no prospect of immediate supplies from Bombay; the communication from the coast was very irregular, but Bednore was before them; and, reckless almost of consequences, it was attacked and carried by escalade, with all the ardour of desperate men. The reduction of the forts of the country followed, and, in a mistaken idea perhaps, all were occupied with small detachments; thus the army was rendered inefficient, and, in a great measure, the execution of these services gave notoriously such profit to the officers engaged in them, on account of the plunder they obtained, that they were with difficulty recalled. The dreams all had entertained of riches appeared to be realized, the spirit of rapacity pervaded all ranks, and each man was anxious to secure what he could of the golden harvest.

During the month of February, these and other operations below the passes took place; and when the army, or such part of it as could

be assembled at Bednore was collected, it was the general expectation that the immense booty would be divided, and at all events, that the army would receive its pay, which to most of the troops was considerably in arrear. Herbert, however, had been prevented, by a wound received at the storm of Anantpoor, from taking any part with his regiment in the operations we have alluded to; he had received a severe sword-cut upon his right arm, which, though it did not confine him to his bed, yet rendered it impossible for him to accompany the regiment; and after the possession of Bednore he remained there with the other sick and wounded. Dalton, on the contrary, continued to be most actively employed, and in all the affairs of the campaign bore a conspicuous part.

His constant association with the General gave him opportunities of observing his character narrowly. While he admired the courage and the perseverance with which he laboured to carry out to the letter the instructions of the Government, he could not but see that his blind reliance upon fate, his neglect of the

most ordinary means of gaining intelligence, and of providing stores and supplies for his army,—while he denied them the power of purchasing for themselves by withholding their pay, which he had ample means to discharge,—would sooner or later be the causes of ruin to the expedition, which, so long as it was not menaced by the armies of Mysore, held efficient possession of the territory it had gained.

Nor was it to be doubted that Tippoo, with the whole resources of his kingdom at his perfect command, would make a decisive attempt for the recovery of this his favourite and most fertile province. Dalton had repeatedly urged these considerations upon his commander with the utmost earnestness, but without effect, and the events which followed their return to Bednore were of a character to excite his most lively apprehensions.

No sooner had the chief commanders of the army re-assembled at Bednore, from their various expeditions, than a division of the plunder, or at any rate an issue of pay, was insisted upon by them, and by some of the officers; for the sum which had been collected was notori-

ously very large. The whole amount of the lately-collected revenue of the district had been seized in the Bednore treasury; and this, with the property and jewels, the plunder of the various forts, might have been considered available in part to the public service. With an obstinacy, however, peculiar to his character, Mathews refused any distribution; the small advances doled out to the officers and the men were dissipated as fast as given, and were totally inadequate to their wants; and a general spirit of discontent, little short of absolute mutiny, arose throughout the army.

After many scenes of violent recrimination, of mutual threats, of forcible suspension from the functions of their office between the General and his subordinates, the latter declared to him in the presence of Dalton and others of his staff, that they felt themselves perfectly justified, for the safety of the army and the furtherance of the public interests, to proceed at once to Bombay, and in person to expose his conduct.

Having come to this determination, Mathews made no attempt to shake it. Convinced, though mistakenly, that he was acting for the public

good, he formally granted them the permission they would otherwise have taken, and requested Captain Dalton would hold himself in readiness to proceed with the three commanders, as the bearer of his despatches, which contained his reasons for acting as he had done, his requests for further aid, and instructions as to his ultimate proceedings.

This was a somewhat sudden blow to Dalton, who would have far preferred remaining with the General, to whom he felt a strong attachment, which was increased by the difficulties and dangers by which he saw him encompassed; and for awhile he endeavoured to make a change in his determination.

There were others, he said, of the staff much more fit to execute the orders than himself; men who were acquainted with the authorities at the Presidency, and with the language of the country, so necessary in a rapid journey to and from the coast. But the General continued inflexible; his confidence in the manly and independent character of Dalton was not to be shaken, and Philip himself soon saw that it was useless to press him upon the point.

Once he suggested that his friend Herbert should fulfill the mission, and the mention of his name thus casually led to a request on the part of the General that he would undertake Captain Dalton's duties during his absence. This was satisfactory to both of them,—to Philip particularly, for he felt assured in the talent and excellent military knowledge of Herbert, which he was daily increasing by study, that the General would have advice upon which he could depend.

"Then, Philip, you will be back within a month?" said Herbert, as they sat together the evening before his departure.

"I think so. Macleod and Humberstone are very friendly to me, though we go upon opposite errands, for which I would to God no necessity existed; and they are determined to get back as soon as possible; indeed, you know it is absolutely necessary, for things cannot go on much longer in this state."

"No, indeed. I regret sincerely that matters are thus; what in the world can make the old man so obstinate?"

"I know not; it is in vain that I have re-

presented the absolute necessity for a distribution of money, or for a prize-committee, in order that the army may know something of what was secured here and elsewhere. It is in vain: the old man is absorbed in the contemplation of this wealth; it occupies his thoughts incessantly; and, though it is not his, yet I verily believe he cannot make up his mind to part with it, merely because it is wealth."

"It is most strange; one of those curious anomalies in human conduct which we often see without being able to give any satisfactory reason for it. I hope, however, the Government will decide the matter, and soon send you back to us, Philip."

"Indeed, I hope so too. I very much suspect the General will be superseded, for in truth he is little fitted to command; but you will be able to judge of this yourself in a day or two."

"Well, I shall see: at any rate he shall have my opinion upon the state of the fortifications, which I have often mentioned to you."

"And I to him; but he relies so implicitly upon his fate, and is so sure of aid, which seems to me like a hope in a miraculous in-

tervention in his favour, that I ceased to urge it."

"There is no use in our speaking more now upon this vexatious subject, Philip, and I pray you to execute my commissions in Bombay. Here are a few letters for England, and some drawings among them; one for Charles's poor mother, and a sketch of the place where he fell, and his last resting-place, which please despatch for me. Perhaps you can get them into the Government packets; if so, they will be safer than in the ship's letter-bags. Here too is a packet of drawings of all our late scenes and skirmishes, — till my wound prevented my sketching any more,—which you may have an opportunity of sending by a private hand; and if not, any of the captains will take it for me, I have no doubt."

"I will arrange all for you safely, Herbert. I have written some letters myself, and they can all go together. I doubt not I shall be able to get one of the secretaries to forward them, and your drawings besides, which are not very large. Anything more?"

"Nothing, except these trifling purchases."

"Certainly, I will bring the contents of the list without fail. So now good bye, and God bless you till we meet again! which I hope will not be further distant than three weeks or a month. Take care of the old commander; and if you can persuade him into parting with some money, and into vigilance and exertion, you will not only be cleverer than I am, but will deserve the thanks of all parties."

"I will try at all events. So good bye! Don't forget my letters, whatever you do, for there are those in our merry England who look for them with almost feverish impatience. God bless you!"

They wrung each other's hands with warm affection, and even the tears started to Herbert's eyes. He thought then that he should be alone, to meet any vicissitudes which might arise, and he could not repress a kind of presentiment of evil, vague and indefinite. If he had been Dalton, he would have expressed it; but his was a differently constituted temperament, and he was silent. Another warm and hearty shake of the hand, and Philip was gone.

The rest of that evening and night was sad

enough to Herbert, and many anxious thoughts for the future rose up in his mind. Dalton was only to be absent a month; but in that time what might not happen? The army was inefficient, from being broken up into detachments, and the best commanders were about to leave: the authority would devolve upon others who were untried in such situations; disaffection and party-spirit were at a high pitch. Should the enemy hear of this, and attack them, he feared they could but ill resist.

However, he thought he could do much by forcible entreaty with the General, whom he was now in a condition to advise: and, as he said, these thoughts are but the effect of circumstances after all. For how often is it that they who are departing on a journey in the prospect of novelty and occupation of thought, have spirits lighter and more buoyant than those, who, remaining, can not only imagine dangers for the absent, but are oppressed with anxieties for their safe progress, and lest evils should come in which their aid and sympathy will be wanting!

But sad thoughts will soon pass away under

the action of a well-regulated mind: and Herbert, in his ensuing duties, found much to occupy his, and prevent it from dwelling upon ideal evils. They were not, however, without foundation.

But a few days had elapsed after the departure of his friend, ere Herbert began to suggest plans to the Commander for the general safety. Young as he was, he put them forward with much diffidence, and only when they were supported by another officer of the staff who could not blind his eyes to the critical state of the army. Leaving for awhile the vexatious subject of money, upon which the General could not be approached without giving way to passionate expressions, they gradually endeavoured to lead his attention to the state of the fortifications, which, ruinous and neglected as they were, could not afford defence against any ordinarily resolute enemy. They next endeavoured to organize some system of intelligence; for of what was passing within twenty miles of Bednore—nay, even the state of their own detachments—they had no knowledge whatever. They urged upon their infatuated commander the

necessity of establishing some order and discipline in the army, which from neglect, inactivity, and poverty, was becoming riotous and unmanageable.

But all was in vain. The more apparent the difficulties of his situation were made to him, the more he tried to shut his eyes against them; and when driven by absolute conviction to confess the peril, which daily increased, though as yet no enemy threatened, he declared that he had reliance in Almighty power to send succour, to perplex the councils of his enemies, to distract their attention from one, who having carried conquest so far, was destined (though certainly in some strait at present) to rise out of all his troubles triumphant, to confound his enemies and those who sought to dispossess him of his situation.

It was in very despair therefore that Herbert and the others, who had aided him in his plans, were at length obliged to desist from further importunity, and to settle down into a kind of dogged resolution to bear with resignation whatever might be hidden behind the dark veil of the future; and all hoped that news would

speedily arrive of the supercession of the General, and the appointment of some other more competent person.

It will be remembered that two persons came into the English camp on the night before the storming of the pass. The fate of one will be fresh in the reader's memory. The other performed his part well: he led the column he guided steadily on one side of all the entrenchments, by narrow by-paths and difficult places: it reached the top in time to intercept the fugitives, who, driven from redoubt to redoubt, and finally from the last, as we have already mentioned, fled panic-stricken, and were destroyed in great numbers by the second column, which intercepted many of them at the summit of the pass.

This guide, whose name was Jaffar Sahib, therefore received his full reward, and more; and as he was assumed to be faithful, so the General kept him about his person, and lent a ready ear to his suggestions. By him he had been informed of some secret stores of treasure, which he had added to the general stock. By him he was told of the terror with which his

presence and conquest had inspired Tippoo and his armies, who would not dare to attack him; and if the unfortunate General ever ventured to express a doubt of the security of his position, he was flattered into the belief that there was no fear, and was told, in the language of Oriental hyperbole, that it was impregnable.

The interpreter between them was the General's personal servant, who—not proof against a heavy bribe, and greater promises—had lent himself to the deep designs of the other.

It was long before suspicion of this person entered the mind of Herbert; but a remark that fell from the General one day, that he had the best information of the proceedings of the enemy, when it was very evident he had none at all, led him to suspect that Jaffar Sahib was exercising with the General a fatal and as yet unknown influence. The man's conduct, however, was so guarded, his civility and his apparent readiness to oblige so great, that it was long before Herbert's suspicion led him to adopt any course to detect him.

But expressions, however light, will sometimes remain upon the memory, and oftentimes

obtrude themselves upon our notice when least expected. During a nightly reverie, when the scenes of the short campaign were vividly present to his imagination, he remembered the tone of contempt in which the gallant Nair had spoken of Jaffar Sahib; and though he had not understood the words, yet he could not help thinking there was more implied in them than Wheeler had noticed. Early the next day he sought that officer, with whom he had been in constant association, and mentioned his doubts to him.

Mr. Wheeler readily repeated the words which the Nair had used; and remembering his tone of contempt, he was gradually led to think with Herbert that there was ground for extreme suspicion and watchfulness. Nothing however could be discovered against the man; and though they set others to watch his movements, they could not ascertain that he held communication with any one but the General's own servants, among whom he lived.

The first three days of April had passed, and as yet there was no news of the issue of the appeal to Bombay. All were anxious upon the

subject, and party-spirit ran higher and higher in consequence. They had soon, however, matter for sterner contemplation. On the fourth morning, early, there arose a slight rumour that Tippoo's army was approaching. Three similar ones had been heard before, but nothing had followed; and Herbert flew with the intelligence to the General, accompanied by Wheeler; for their suspicions were roused to the utmost against Jaffar Sahib.

"Impossible!" said the General when he had heard the news. "I have the most positive information that Tippoo is at Seringapatam, and purposes advancing in the opposite direction, to meet the Madras army. Who is the author of this groundless rumour, gentlemen?"

"It was prevalent," they said, "in the bazaar."

"Some scheme of the grain-merchants to raise the price of grain, I have no doubt. But here is Jaffar Sahib, the faithful fellow to whom we owe much of our success, and who would be the first to give this information if it were true: ask him, if you please, Mr. Wheeler, what he thinks."

Wheeler put the question, and the man laughed confidently.

"It is a lie,—it is a lie! Look you, sir, as you speak my language so well, perhaps you can read it also. Here are letters which I have daily received from Seringapatam, through a friend, who thus risks his life in the service of the brave English. They contain the daily records of the bazaar there, and the movements of the troops."

"We will have them read by a scribe, if you please, General," said Wheeler. "If thou art faithless, as I suspect," he continued to the man, "thou shalt hang on the highest tree in the Fort!"

"My life is in your hands," he replied in his usual subdued tone; "I am not afraid that you should read."

The letters were read, and were, as he described them to be, daily accounts from the capital, where the army was said to be quiet. The last letter was only four days old, the time which the post usually occupied.

"Now, gentlemen, are you satisfied?" cried the General in triumph. "Have I not always

told you I possessed the most exact information through this my faithful servant? Contradict, I pray you, this absurd rumour, and believe me that there is no danger."

But the next morning, as the day broke, a cloud of irregular cavalry was seen by those on the look out, advancing from the southward; and, amidst the confusion and alarm which followed, no efforts were made to check them,—none to defend the outer lines of fortification, which would have enabled the English to have strengthened their position within. A few skirmishes occurred, in ineffectual attempts to retain their ground, and before noon the place was formally invested by the regular infantry and very efficient artillery of Tippoo's army.

Herbert and Wheeler made every search for Jaffar Sahib, but he was nowhere to be found. In the confusion, he and the General's servant, who had been his confidant and associate, had escaped.

Then only broke upon the unfortunate General a bitter prospect, and a sense of the misery he had brought upon himself and others. But instead of yielding to any despair, the

courage and discipline of the army rose with the danger which threatened its very existence: animosities were forgotten: and while the siege of the Fort was vigorously pressed by Tippoo, and with the most efficient means, its defenders exerted themselves with the intrepidity and spirit of English soldiers to repel their assailants.

With their insufficient means of defence, however—with broken and ruined walls—the gradual failure of ammunition and of food—their exertions at length relaxed; and after a vigorous assault, directed by Tippoo in person, they were forced to relinquish the outer walls, and retire within the citadel, where they were now closer and closer pressed, and without any chance of escape or relief. In this condition, and having done all that brave men could for the defence of their honour and of their post, the General was induced to offer a capitulation. The deputation was received with courtesy by Tippoo, the officers complimented on their valorous defence of an almost untenable post; and the articles of capitulation having been drawn up, they returned to their

companions. The conditions were accepted with some modifications, after a day or two's negotiation, and the 30th of April was fixed as that on which they should march out with the honours of war; and after that, they should move with their private property to the coast. It was destined however to be otherwise.

By the articles of capitulation it was specified, that all treasure in possession of the garrison was to be given up—that, though the private property of the officers and men was to be respected, yet all public stores and treasure were to be surrendered in good faith.

But the officers and men, whose means of subsistence—now that the army was to be broken up and disorganized, upon becoming prisoners of war—would entirely depend upon the charity of their conquerors, were little inclined to trust to so questionable a source; and the evening before the capitulation was to be carried into effect, a large body of the garrison, in a state of mutiny, surrounded the abode of the General, and with tumultuous cries demanded pay.

Herbert was with the old man, assisting him

to pack up such articles as could most easily be carried away, when the demand was made. It was in vain that, by the General's order, he attempted to reason with the men, to show them the dishonour of touching anything or what had been promised in exchange for their lives. They would listen to no reason.

"We are starving," they cried, "and there is treasure yonder: we will have it!"

But at last they were satisfied, on receiving the assurance of a month's pay to each man, and reluctantly the General surrendered the keys of the treasury.

The regiments were engaged in receiving the money, when some one, bolder than the rest, exclaimed, "Why not have it all, boys? We may as well have it, as let it go to the enemy."

The cry acted at once upon their excited spirits. "Let us have it all!" was repeated by hundreds; and ere they could be prevented, the contents of the treasury were plundered and distributed amongst them. Officers and men alike were laden with the spoil in jewels and money.

It was with bitter regret that this was seen

by Herbert and many others, whose high sense of honour forbade their sharing in the work of plunder. It would be impossible, they thought, to conceal such an event from the Mysore chief; and as it was a direct breach of the articles they had solemnly agreed to, they but too justly anticipated a severe retribution for the act.

It was even so. On the morrow, as they marched out with the melancholy honours of war, a wasted band, worn out with fatigue and privation, they were surrounded by Tippoo's troops, while others took possession of the Fort. The keys of the magazines and treasures had been given up with the rest, and there was an immediate search made for the valuables, of which the place was well known to be full—to Tippoo personally; for, as may have been anticipated, the guide Jaffar was the means of the intelligence which he possessed, and through whom he had been informed of every event which had happened; though his share in the previous British success he had kept concealed from the Sultaun: indeed it was known to none except the British.

Disappointed at the issue of the examination,

the English were at once suspected, and denounced by Jaffar. They were surrounded and rudely searched: on most was found a portion of the missing money and jewels; and, as it but too well fell in with Tippoo's humour, and gratified his hate against them, they were one and all decreed to captivity—which, from the horrors all had heard related of it, was in prospect worse than death.

CHAPTER V.

Abdool Rhyman Khan, as may be imagined, quitted his wives in no very pleasant mood; tired by his long march, and without having tasted food since the morning, the bitter insult he had received, their disrespect and their abuse, were the more aggravating, and sank deeply into his heart. Although not a man of wrath habitually, or one indeed who could be easily excited, he was now in very truth enraged, and felt that he would have given worlds for any object on which he could have vented the fury that possessed him.

"Alla! Alla!" he exclaimed, as he ground his teeth in vexation,—"that I should have been born to eat this abomination; that I, who have a grey beard, should be thus taunted by

my women, and called a coward, one less than a man! I who, Mashalla! have slain men, even Feringhees!—that I should have to bear this—Ya Hyder! Ya Hoosein!—but I am a fool to be thus excited. Let them only fail to receive Ameena as she ought to be received—let me but have a pretext for what I have long desired, and now threatened, and they will see whether my words are truth or lies. Too long have I borne this,—first one, then the other—now Kummoo, now Hoormut—now one's mother, now the other's brothers and cousins; but, Inshalla! this is the last dirt I eat at their hands—faithless and ungrateful! I will send them back to their homes; I have often threatened it, and now will do it."

His horse awaited him at the door, and, springing into the saddle, he urged him furiously on through the Fort gate, into the plain beyond; and here—for the rapid motion was a relief to him—he lunged him round and round; now exciting him to speed, now turning him rapidly from one side to another, as though in pursuit of an imaginary enemy. This he did for some time, while his groom

and Daood looked quietly on; the latter attributing to its true cause the Khan's excitement, the former wondering what could possess his master to ride so furiously after the long journey the horse had already performed that morning.

The Khan at last desisted—either from feeling his temper cooling, or from observing that his horse was tired—and turning first towards the encampment, he proceeded a short distance; but apparently remembering something, he retraced his steps towards the Fort; indeed he had forgotten to report the arrival of his corps to the officer whose duty it was to receive the intelligence.

As he passed his house, he saw one of the women-servants, who used to go on errands or make purchases in the bazaar, issue from the door-way, and covering her face dart on before him, apparently to elude his observation.

"Ha! by the Prophet, I will know what that jade is after," muttered the Khan to himself, as he dashed his heels into his charger's flanks, and was up with her in a moment. "Where goest thou?" he cried; "Kulloo,

think not to conceal thyself; I saw thy face as thou camest out of the door; what errand hast thou now?"

"May I be your sacrifice, Khan!" said the woman; "I am only sent for the Khanum Kummoo's mother,—may her prosperity increase!"

"May her lot be perdition rather!" cried the Khan; "an old devil,—but never mind me; go thy way; I know why she is called. May the Prophet give them grace of their consultation!" he added ironically; "tell thy mistress that; and tell her too," he continued, speaking between his teeth, and looking back after he had gone a little way, "tell her to remember my words, which I will perform if there be occasion, so help me Alla and his Prophet—now begone!"

The woman was right glad to escape, and the Khan pursued his way to the office where he had to make his report, and to ascertain what was to be done with the prisoners whom he had escorted from Bangalore. This necessarily occupied some time: the officer was an intimate friend, and the Khan had not only much to learn, but much also to communicate.

His own marriage, his journey, his double escape, and the gallantry of his young friend Kasim Ali, were mentioned, and excited the utmost praise, with many expressions of wonder from the hearers; and all were anxious to see, and become acquainted with, the hero of so much adventure.

"And what news have you from Hyderabad for us, Khan Sahib?" said his friend, whose name was Meer Saduk, a favourite and confidential officer of the Sultaun; "what news for the Sultaun? may his greatness increase! I hope you were able to gather the intentions of the court there, or at any rate can give us some idea of them."

The Khan's journey to Hyderabad had not entirely been of a private description. A native of the place, when he asked leave to proceed there to see his family, he had been requested by the Sultaun to ascertain as far as he could the politics of the State, and the part the Nizam personally was likely to play in the drama of Indian intrigue and diplomacy; and he had performed his mission with more tact than could have been anticipated from his open and blunt nature.

"I have news," he replied, "Meer Sahib, which will gratify the Sultaun, I think; and from such good sources too, that I am inclined to place the utmost dependence upon them. No sooner was it known that I, as an officer of the Sircar Khodadad*, had arrived in the city, than I was sought by several of the nobles and Munsubdars of the court, who in truth were friendly to the last degree, when I did not well know how I should have fared with them; and it appeared from their speech that the Huzoor himself was well inclined to be friendly. This is all I can tell you, Meer Sahib, and you must not press me, for I have sworn to tell the rest to the Sultaun only; after he has heard it, I will let you know."

"Enough, Khan, I am content; the Sultaun will be at the Doulut Bagh tonight, and to-morrow also; wilt thou come this evening?"

"Pardon me, not tonight; I am tired, and have to arrange my house after my journey; but, Inshalla! tomorrow evening, when I shall present my young Roostum, and solicit employment for him. Being the bearer of good news,

* "The Government, the gift of God."

I may be successful; but in any case I think Kasim Ali would be welcome."

"There is not a doubt of it," replied his friend. "I go to the Durbar tonight, and will tell of thy adventurous journey; this will whet the Sultaun's curiosity to see the young Syud."

The friends then separated. In spite of this amicable interview, the Khan's temper, which had been so violently chafed, was not completely soothed: the memory of the abuse which had been poured upon him still rankled at his heart, and he was at a loss what to tell Ameena of his interview with his wives, and of her having to meet them that evening.

The nearer he approached his tents in the camp, the more oppressive these thoughts became; and alternately blaming himself for having visited his wives so early after his arrival, and mentally threatening them with punishment should they continue insubordinate, he had gradually worked himself up to a pitch of ill temper, but little less than that in which he had left his house, and which he was ready to discharge upon any one.

The opportunity was not long wanting; for, as he entered his outer tent, which was used by Kasim and the Moonshees, as well as by any visitor or friends, he heard a violent altercation, in which Kasim's voice and that of the Moonshee, Naser-oo-deen, were very prominent.

"I tell thee thou art a cheat and a rogue!" Kasim was exclaiming with vehemence; "this is the second time I have detected thee, and therefore instantly alter these accounts and repay the money, or I will tell the Khan."

"I am no cheat nor rogue, any more than thyself, thou nameless base-born!" retorted the Moonshee, whose remaining words were lost in the violent passion of the other.

"Base-born! dog! thou shalt rue this," cried Kasim; "thou shalt not escape me, by Alla! I will beat thee with a shoe." And a scuffle ensued.

"Hold!" exclaimed the Khan, who now rushed into the tent and parted them; "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Khodawund!" cried both at once.

"Do thou speak, Naser-oo-deen," said the

Khan; "thou art the oldest. What is the meaning of this disturbance? is this the bazaar? hast thou, an old man, no shame? Hast thou too lost all respect, Kasim Ali?"

"Judge if I have not cause to be angry, O Khan, at being called a rogue and a cheat by that boy," said the Moonshee; "have I not cause to be enraged when my character is thus taken away?"

"Wherefore didst thou say this, Kasim, to a respectable man like him? these words are improper from such a youth as thou art."

"Khan Sahib," said Kasim, "you have hitherto trusted me implicitly; is it not so? you have never doubted me?"

"Never; go on."

"Alla is my witness!" he continued; "I know no other motive in this but your welfare and prosperity, which first led me to enquire, in consequence of my suspicion. Since the Moonshee has provoked it, and my lord is present, know then why I called him rogue and cheat. At Bangalore, by making notes of the prices in the bazaars, I detected him in overcharging for grain and forage to an immense amount in the

week's account; I found the papers here, while my lord was absent, and for lack of other occupation I began looking over the items. I see the same thing again attempted—he swears he will not alter the papers, and I was angry; he called me base-born—"

"Yes, I heard that, Kasim; but say, hast thou proof of all this?"

"Behold the daily memorandum I made of the rates, Khan, village after village, and day after day, written as I made the inquiry; the grain and forage was I know bought from the very people from whose lips I had the rates. Call them if you like—they are the bazaar merchants."

"And so thou wouldst have cheated me, Naser-oo-deen," said the Khan, his choler rising rapidly and obstructing his speech, and looking wrathfully at the trembling Moonshee; "thou who owest me so much, to cheat me! Alla! Alla! have I deserved this? To what amount was the fraud, Kasim?"

"A hundred rupees or more, Khan, at least, even upon this week's account; I could not tell exactly without making up the whole difference."

"I doubt it not, I doubt it not; and if this for one week or a little more, what for the whole time since thou hast had this place—the sole control of my horses' expenditure! what —"

"My lord! my lord!" ejaculated the Moonshee, "be not so angry; your slave is terrified—he dares not speak; he has not cheated, he has never given a false account."

But his looks belied his words; he stood a convicted rogue, even while he tried thus weakly to assert his innocence; for he trembled much, and his lips were blue from terror.

"We will soon see that," said the Khan deliberately. "Go!" he said to Daood, who stood by, "bring two grooms with whips; let us see whether they cannot bring this worthy man to a very different opinion."

It was not needed, however; the Moonshee, terrified almost to speechlessness, and not heeding the interference Kasim was earnestly making in his behalf, prostrated himself on the ground at the Khan's feet.

"I will pay! I will pay all!" he cried; "I confess my false accounts. Do with me what

thou wilt, but oh! save my character; I am a respectable man."

"Good!" said the Khan; "all of ye who are present hear that he has confessed himself a thief before he was touched, and that he says he is a respectable man. Ye will bear me witness in this—a respectable man—Ya Moula Ali!"

All answered that they would. "Take him then," he said to Daood and some of the Furashes who stood near, "take him from my sight; put him on an ass, with his face to the tail; blacken his face, and show him in the bazaar. If any one recognises the *respectable* Naser-oo-deen, and asks after his health, say that he is taking the air by my order, for having cheated me. Enough—begone!"

The order did not need repetition; amidst his cries and protestations against the sudden sentence, the Moonshee was carried off; and in a few minutes, his face blackened and set on an ass with his face to the tail, he was the sport of the idlers and vagabonds in the camp. He had richly deserved his punishment however; for with a short-sighted cunning he had imagined that he could brazen out his false

accounts, and that, as he had declared that any division of the spoil was at an end from the previous detection, he had made himself now sure of the whole. He had thought too that Kasim, contented with his first detection of overcharge, would not have continued his system of inquiry. Thus he was doubly disappointed.

Having vented his long pent-up rage, the Khan soon cooled down into his usual pleasant deportment, begging Kasim to explain to him minutely the whole of the Moonshee's system of false accounts. This Kasim did clearly, and showed him how much cause there was to suspect far greater delinquencies, for months, nay years past; indeed, it was but too apparent that the Khan had been defrauded of large sums, and that the Moonshee's gains must have been enormous.

"And this might have gone on for ever, Kasim, but for thy penetration," said the Khan. "Well, thou hast added another to the very good reasons I already have for aiding thee. Our reception is to take place tomorrow evening, against which time get thy best apparel ready;

or stay—I have a better thought; wait here, and I will return instantly." He did so, and brought with him a superb suit of cloth-of-gold, quite new.

"There," he said, "take that, Kasim, and wear it tomorrow; it is the best kumkhab* of Aurungabad, and was made for one of my marriage-dresses. Nay, no words, for thou hast saved me far more than the cost of it in the detection of yon scoundrel; and now prepare thyself. This may not fit thee, thou canst have it altered. I shall remove the Khanum to my house tonight, and sleep there; but come by the third watch of the day tomorrow: they will show thee where it is, and I will be ready to accompany thee. Inshalla! I have that news for the Sultaun which shall make him propitious towards us both." And so saying, he left him, and went through the inclosure which separated the tents, into that which was appropriated to Ameena.

From a window in the tent, which was screened by transparent blinds, so that the inmates could look out without being seen,

* Cloth-of-gold.

Ameena was sitting and gazing on the plain, which swarmed with men, elephants, horses, and camels, hurrying to and fro. Beyond was the Fort, from the gate of which every now and then issued a gay cavalcade,—an elephant, bearing some officer of rank, surrounded by spearmen and running footmen,—or a troop of gaily-dressed horsemen, who, as they advanced, spread over the plain, and amused themselves with feats of horsemanship, pursuing each other in mock combat, or causing their horses to perform bounds and caracoles, to the admiration of the beholders.

"A gallant sight! is it not, fairest? and a gallant and noble patron of soldiers do we serve—one who hath not his equal in Hind. Say, didst thou ever see such at thy city?"

"No, in truth," said Ameena, who had risen to receive her lord; "but thou knowest we lived in a quiet street of the city, so that few cavaliers passed that way; nevertheless, we have brave soldiers there also. I would I could live among such scenes always," she added; "it is pleasant to sit and look out on men of such gallant bearing."

"I am afraid thou wilt not see so much within the Fort," said the Khan; "nevertheless, my house is in the main thoroughfare, and there are always men passing."

"And when are we to remove there, my lord?" asked Ameena timidly, for she feared the introduction to the wives more than she dared express. "Methinks I should live as well here as there; and I have been now so much accustomed to the tents, that a house would appear a confinement to me."

"Why, fairest, thou shouldst remain in them only that they want repair very much, and we have prospect of immediate service; besides, the house is all prepared for thee, and I long to make my rose mistress of what is hers in right; so we will go thither this afternoon. Zoolfoo has orders to prepare our evening meal."

"And they—" she could not say *wives*—

"Fear not; they will be prepared to receive thee with honour. I have spoken with them, and bidden them be ready to welcome thee."

"Alla bless them!" said Ameena, the tears starting to her eyes; "and will they be kind to one whom they ought to hate? Alla bless

them! I did not look for this, but expected much misery."

"Fear not," said the Khan, who winced under her artless remark, yet dared not undeceive her. "Fear not, they will be kind to thee; Inshalla! ye will be sisters together." Alas, he had but little hope of this, though he said it. But it is necessary to revert to the ladies themselves.

The Khan's two wives sat in anxious expectation of the arrival of the lady for whom they had dispatched the servant; they had held a hurried colloquy together after the Khan's departure in the morning, and had come to the resolution of abiding by the advice of the mother of Kummoobee, who was the wife of the head Kazee of Seringapatam, a wealthy but corrupt man, who, of good family himself, had married the daughter of a poor gentleman of long descent but of extreme poverty. She inherited all her father's pride of birth, and had married her daughter to the Khan, only because of his rank and known wealth; for she despised his low origin, which had become known to her—indeed it was not sought to be concealed.

As the ladies waited, they heard the sound of bearers, and in a few moments the jingle of the anklets and heavy tread of the old lady, as she advanced along the open verandah of the court which led to their apartment. They rose to welcome her, and the next moment she entered, and advanced towards her daughter—almost starting as she saw the Khan's other wife, knowing that they had been enemies; but returning her salaam very courteously, she proceeded to take the evil from her daughter by cracking her knuckles over her. Having done this, and embraced, she was led to the musnud; and being seated thereon, and her daughter's hooka given to her, she drew a long breath as if she had exerted herself very much, and looking from one to the other (for the slaves had been ordered out of the room), demanded to know what they had to say to her.

"We have news for thee, mother," said Kummoobee pettishly.

"Ay, news, rare news!" added the other, who seemed as spiteful as suppressed anger could make her.

"Ajaib!" said the old lady, looking from one to the other, "wonderful news? By your souls, tell me what news: what has happened that I know not of?"

"Of the Khan," said Kummoo, edging nearer to her mother.

"Ay, listen," said the other; "Mashalla! it is worth hearing."

"Of the Khan? most wonderful! Is he dead?—have ye all his money?"

"No," ejaculated Kummoo passionately; "it would be well for us and him if he were dead. Dead! no, he is returned, and well."

"Well!" said the old lady, apparently relieved, "there is nothing very wonderful in this—nothing particular to marvel at, that I see; if I had known I was to have been called from home only to hear this, I can tell you, you would have waited long. I had a thousand things to do when Kulloo came for me; I was going to cook a dish, and then I had the woman with bangles for my arms, and then the silversmith was coming, and—"

"Alla! Alla! how shall I tell this shame?" cried her daughter, interrupting her; "how

shall I utter the words, to make it fit for thee to hear or my tongue to utter? Alas! mother, he has returned, and brought a woman with him, —a woman who, Inshalla! is vile and ugly, and unchaste, and low-born, and who—"

"Punah-i-Khoda, a woman! thou didst not say a woman! Another wife?" cried the old lady, interrupting the torrent of foul names, which, once the subject of them had been named, followed rapidly enough.

"So he says, mother," cried Hoormut, "another wife. He dared not write this to either of us; he dared not tell us how he had misused us, how he had cheated us; he dared not tell us this; and we heard it only from my cousin, who discovered it at Nundidroog, and wrote to the family."

"I will throw ashes on his beard—I will fill his mouth with earth! I will spit on him!" cried the old lady, who, having looked from the one to the other, was now excited to fury at this sudden intelligence; "Ya Alla Kereem! What dirt has he not eaten? What abomination have ye also to bear, O my daughters? Married again? another wife? a young one,

I 'll warrant, the old lecher! Oh shame, shame on his grey hairs! may dogs defile them!—and beautiful, too, I have no doubt! Is there no law? is there no justice? Inshalla! we will see to that. Is he to throw dirt on the family of the chief Kazee, and cause his daughter to eat grief? is he to mock us, to cheat us, to bring his vile women before our very faces, without we turn and strike again? Are we cows and sheep? Inshalla, no! but persons of good family, of a hundred descents; while he —pah!—he is a poor, pitiful, low-born, ill-bred wretch!" And she paused, fairly exhausted from want of breath.

"Ay, mother," said Kummoobee, "and what is more, he has threatened to bring her here tonight—here, into this very house—to make us see her and welcome her—pah! I could cry with passion."

"Here? it is a lie!" roared the old lady; "it is a lie! this is some trick of yours, or joke; I will not believe that. Is he mad to do it?"

"It is the truth however," said Hoormut; "and what is more, he swore by Alla and the

Prophet's beard, if we did not receive her kindly, he would send us both home to our parents, and let them support us, for he would not."

"At least *I* need not care about *that*," said Kummoo, pointedly and spitefully; "Inshalla! I shall always find food and clothes there: *my* people, Mashalla! are not poor."

With the other it was different; for her family were poor, and had been ruinously extravagant; and even their mutual dilemma could not prevent this expression of spite from her richer sister-wife.

"I should like to know," retorted Hoormut tartly, "who could not?"

At any other time a quarrel would have resulted to a certainty. But now Kummoo's mother spoke again, fortunately for the general peace.

"So he threatened that, did he? And what said ye?" added the old lady, more calmly: for, in truth, the sudden vision of her daughter's return to her house, which the words she had just heard caused, were not by any means agreeable.

"Mother, we could say nothing, for he left

us," replied her daughter; "and we have sent for you to ask your advice as to what we should do," said Kummoo, wiping her eyes with the end of her doputta.

"Humph!" said the old lady, after a pause, and some most vigorous pulls at the hooka, ending in a discharge of smoke through her nostrils; "do you know whether the girl is beautiful?"

"We hear she is," said Hoormut very reluctantly, and with an indignant toss of her head, which was repeated by the other lady.

"Then there is no use to resist, my daughters. The old fool is bewitched with her, and all you can do is to bear the insult—for such it is—until you can revenge it. Ay, revenge it! Thou art no daughter of mine, Kummoo, if thou canst bear this like a mean-spirited thing. I never suffered any one to come between me and thy father; he tried it more than once, but, Mashalla! he got tired of that."

"And so thou wouldst have me bear it, mother," said Kummoo, bursting into a torrent of tears, the effects of her vexation. "I had expected different advice from thee. How can I

bear to meet the vile creature, whom I could spit upon and beat with a shoe?—how to lose my power, influence, money, clothes, jewels, attendants—all of which will be lavished on this child? How can I eat the dirt which the very seeing her will occasion? Mother, I tell thee true, I cannot and I will not bear it. I will appeal to my father, and to the Sultaun, if he will not hear me."

"Patience, my child, patience!" said the old lady, soothingly. "Not so fast—all in good time: it is better to eat dirt for one night than all thy life. Why shouldst thou be afraid? Mashalla! thou art beautiful—thou art of perfect form—thou art not old. Inshalla! wait therefore: let this novelty wear off, and he will return to thee—to both of you, Inshalla! Inshalla! Meanwhile I will consult thy father. I will see if the law can avail thee aught But for the present—for the sake of the Prophet—keep thy temper. Wouldst thou not eat dirt for ever—both of ye, I say—if he turned ye out to your homes? What would not be said? Verily, that ye were vile and worthless, and that he had detected you in his absence.

Therefore wait: Inshalla and the Prophet! we will be revenged. I who am your mother say this,—on him and her we will have our exchange for this,—if charms or spells—or, what is better, womens' wit—can effect this."

"Quickly then, mother, by your soul! devise something. I shall live in misery till thou dost, and we will aid thee. Is it not so, sister?"

"I promise to do all ye wish of me," returned Hoormut; "I am in your hands. Alas! I have now no mother whom I can consult: you are my only mother, lady!" And she began to sob.

"Do not cry, daughter," said the dame, rising majestically; "Inshalla! we shall prosper yet. Alla Hafiz! I go to think over the matter, and consult my faithful Ummun; she is wise, and to her I am indebted for many a charm, without which it would have fared ill with me. I will send her tomorrow, and thou canst tell her what happened when he brought her, and what she is like;" and so saying, she left them.

"Since we are to see her," said Kummoo, who had been hiding her vexation by looking out

of the window to watch her mother's departure, "and to behold her triumph over us, we must only eat our own vexation, and make the best of the matter: let us prepare the room—the Khan has ordered the repast—we will get some garlands and salute them. If we are not to be revenged at once by insulting them both, at least let us pretend civility, which may blind them to our ultimate purposes."

"Excellent advice, sister!" said Hoormut, who, though the elder, yet had lost much of her authority to the younger and far handsomer Kummoo; "let us make a rejoicing of it—sing and play to them, and put on our best clothes; we shall not fail to please the Khan."

"Best clothes!" echoed Kummoo, "alas! the time for those is gone. We may even have to wear *her* cast-off suits for want of better. No more clothes, no more jewels!" she added pettishly; "but what matters it? revenge will follow. Hoormut, thy advice is good; we will prepare for the marriage-feast. Pah! I have no patience to mention it."

And so they did. A clean covering was put upon the musnud; the crimson velvet pillows

of state occasions laid upon it; the Khan's gold Pāndān and Uttrdān set out, and their costly hookas arranged near them. All the slaves were desired to put on clean clothes; and they themselves, dressed in their most sumptuous apparel and adorned with all their jewels, were seated about the time of evening in the room which on that morning had been the scene of so violent an altercation.

Trembling for the issue of the event, but cheered by the Khan to the utmost of his power, the gentle Ameena accompanied him about dusk to his abode in the Fort. The palankeen was set down in the court-yard; and the bearers having retired, she essayed to get out of it, but could hardly support her trembling limbs. One or two of the women servants, however, kindly assisted her, and a cup of cool water refreshed her. The Khan too had now arrived; and veiling herself closely, she followed him into the apartment which had been prepared.

The Khan had been uncertain what would be the issue, until he reached the room; but he had determined, if necessary, to carry his threat into execution. A glance however assured him

that all was right. The ladies rose courteously, made them low salaams, and advanced to meet them; and as he led forward the shrinking girl, they took her kindly by the hand with many warm welcomes and blessings, and, despite of her protestations to the contrary, seated her upon the place of honour and themselves at her feet. This done, a slave advanced with a tray of garlands of the sweet Moteea, one of which they hung around her neck, while they again salaamed to her, and the slaves one by one did the same. The Khan too underwent these ceremonies with delight, for he had little expected such a greeting.

The ladies at last were seated, and Kummoo said, "Let us, I pray thee, sister, see the face of which report hath spoken so warmly; unveil, I beseech thee, that we may look on our new sister."

"It is not worth seeing," said the timid girl, throwing back the end of her doputta; "nevertheless your kindness and welcome is so great that I cannot refuse you."

"Ya Alla!" cried one and all, "how beautiful!" for they were really struck with her ap-

pearance, and could not restrain their sincere expression of admiration at her loveliness. "Mashalla! the Khan has good taste."

Kummoo, the principal speaker, and the youngest of the two wives, was beautiful too; but her flashing eyes, full person, and rather dark skin, though her features were regular, could but ill stand a comparison with the gentle beauty, exquisite though small proportions, and fair skin of Ameena; and the Khan's eye, which wandered from one to the other for a few moments, rested at last on Ameena with a look so full of admiration, that it did not—could not—escape Kummoo's notice. She of course said nothing, but the venom of her heart arose with more bitterness than ever.

"Ay, she is fair, Kummoobee," said the Khan, "and gentle as she is fair; I am thankful that ye seem already to love her as a sister. Inshalla! ye will be friends and sisters in truth, when ye know each other better."

"Inshalla-ta-Alla!" said Kummoobee reverently; "the Khanum (may her house be honoured!) is welcome; how sayest thou, Hoormut? hast thou no welcome for the lady?"

"By your head and eyes, you speak well, sister. If the love of such an unknown and unworthy person as I am be worth anything, the Khanum is welcome to it."

"I am grateful," said Ameena; "ye are more than kind to one who hath no claim on ye; but I am alone here, and my people are far distant—very far. Your love will be precious to me during the years Alla may cast our lots together."

There was something very touching in her sad and gentle tone; and as the old Khan's heart had been moved by his wives' unexpected kindness, he well nigh blubbered aloud.

"Ameena!" he said, "Ameena! Alla, who hears ye say these words of affection, will give ye grace to abide by them."

"But come," said Kummoo, who thought these protestations of love going rather too far, "we have some of our singers for thee to hear, lady: we of the south call them good, but we hear rare things of the Dōmnees of Hyderabad. Call them in," she added to an attendant.

They came in, and, having tuned their instruments, began one of the usual songs of con-

gratulation; it was followed by others, while the party sat and conversed cheerily on the adventures of the journey. An ample repast was shortly after spread; and at the end of the evening Ameena retired to her new apartments, believing, in her simplicity and goodness, that her sister-wives loved her in real truth, and enjoying those sweet sensations which ensue whenever doubt and mistrust have been removed from the heart. If the Khan felt any of his own doubts remaining, he did not seek to disturb Ameena's security by imparting them to her; and for the first time since she had heard of the existence of her sister-wives, Ameena felt happy.

CHAPTER VI.

KASIM attended closely to the advice of the Khan, and spared no pains, on the day which was to fix his fate and rank in the service, to adorn his person to the best advantage. The splendid brocade suit which the Khan had given him—of crimson silk, with large gold flowers upon it, the most expensive the looms of Aurungabad could produce—he had found to fit him so nearly, that it required but few alterations, which were easily made.

This, therefore, he was able to wear. Around his head was a mundeel, or turban of gauze and gold in alternate stripes. The colour of the gauze was green, which marked his descent as a

Syud; and it was an additional reason, beyond his own pride in the matter, for thus openly showing it, that the Sultaun, in his zeal for the Faith, was particularly partial to the nobly-descended race. The mundeel was of the richest and most expensive kind, and its costly fabric suited well with the appearance of the brocade suit. He had bound it, too, in the most approved and genteel form—that worn by the nobility of the Dekhan, and which is called *nashtalik*.

Under his chin, and tied on the top of his head, so as to protect the ears, he wore a Benares handkerchief—the gift of his mother—of purple and silver, the glittering ends of which fluttered in the breeze as he walked, while the colour contrasted well with his fair skin. His waist was girded by a crimson muslin doputta, or scarf, with gold ends nearly a foot long, richly embroidered, which hung down on one side, and were displayed to the best advantage. A pair of tight-fitting trowsers of yellow mushroo, or thick satin, striped with crimson, completed a costume which for its splendour could not well be surpassed, and

which displayed his striking figure and handsome face to the best advantage.

The baldric, which held his father's trusty sword, was tarnished to be sure, but that was a mark of its having seen service; and it was the more honourable in appearance on that account. Its gold inlaid half-basket hilt had been newly polished, and the crimson velvet scabbard renewed; and it looked, as indeed it was, a handsome as well as most formidable weapon, from its great length and breadth. Two or three daggers, with richly chased and ornamented handles, occupied a conspicuous place in his girdle; his shield hung loosely at his back; and thus accoutred, he mounted the gallant horse which the Khan had provided for him, and which had not only been more richly caparisoned than usual, but decked with a profusion of silver ornaments, and took his way into the Fort.

Many an eye was turned towards him as he passed along; for the proud animal he rode, apparently aware that the appearance of his rider warranted more than usual exertion, and excited by the clashing and jingling of the sil-

ver ornaments and tiny bells around his neck and upon his crupper, bounded to and fro, curvetted and pranced, as much to show off his own unexceptionable shape, as to display his rider's admirable and easy horsemanship to the best advantage.

"A gallant cavalier!" cried one, as he passed near the gate of the Fort, loud enough for Kasim to hear it; "five hundred rupees would not buy his suit of clothes. Mashalla! this is the place after all where soldiers are patronised, and come to spend their money in adorning their persons."

"Ay, brother," said the man he was with; "knowest thou who that is? it is Kasim Ali Patél—he who saved Rhyman Khan's life on—"

Kasim lost the rest of the sentence as he passed on; but it proved to him, and not unpleasantly, that the only action he had as yet performed worthy of note was known.

"If my fate favour me, it shall not be the last. Ya Nusseeb!" he cried, apostrophizing his fate, "thou art darkly hidden; but if it be the will of Alla, thou shalt yet shine brightly out."

"Alla kereem! what a beautiful youth!"

exclaimed a bevy of dancing girls, whose gaily-ornamented bullock-carriage obstructed the gate-way of the Fort, and who in all the pride of gay and glittering apparel, and impudence of fair and pretty faces (their lustrous eyes even made more so by the use of soorméh), were proceeding to the Sultaun's Durbar.

"Alla, what a beautiful youth!" cried one; "wilt thou not come and visit us?"

"Shall we see thee at the Durbar?" cried two others.

"I am stricken with love at once," said a fourth.

"What a coat! what a horse! what eyes!" cried first one, then another; until Kasim, whose horse had become uneasy at this volley of words, and at the jingling and clashing of the bells around the bullock's necks or attached to the posts and crimson curtains of the car—and had curvetted once or twice, so as to cause a few faint shrieks, and afterwards a burst of merry laughter from the fair ones—bounded on, and freed him from them.

Passing hastily through the gate-way, he rode on into the Fort—first through an open

space, where cannon-balls in heaps, cannon mounted on carriages, and soldiers moving in all directions, showed the efficient state of the Fort for defence. Beyond this was the bazaar—long streets of goodly houses, the lower parts of which were shops, and where all sorts of grain, rich clothes, tobacco, brazen pans, and arms of all kinds, were exposed for sale.

As he rode along slowly through the crowd,—among which his appearance attracted much notice and many flattering comments,—he could not but observe that every house was gaudily ornamented with paintings, which were a proof, if any was needed, in what hatred the English were held by all.

Here were represented a row of white-faced Feringhees, their hands tied behind them, and with their faces half blackened; while others were seated on asses, with their faces to the tail. Again there were some being torn to pieces by tigers, while men of the true faith looked on and applauded; others were under the feet or chained to the legs of elephants, one to each leg, while the beast was depicted at his utmost speed, his trunk

raised into the air, and the Mahout evading him with a huge ankoos. Again another row were undergoing the rite of Mahomedanism at the hands of the Kazee; others were suffering torture; several appeared drawn up in a line, whose heads were all falling to the ground under one vigorous blow of the executioner—a man of the true faith, with a huge beard and mustachios curling up to his eyes, while streams of gore, very red and much higher and thicker than the sufferers themselves, gushed from the bodies.

Here again were a group of ten or twelve seated round a table, each with a fierce regimental cocked-hat upon his head, a very red and drunken face, and his right hand upraised grasping a huge glass filled with red wine; while others, overcome by inebriation, were sprawling under the table and wallowing among the swine and dogs which lay at the feet of those who were yet able to preserve their equilibrium.

Kasim was amused at all this; and if he could not enter into the general hatred with all the zest of one of Tippoo's soldiers, perhaps it

was that the remembrance of the young Englishman whom we have mentioned rose in his mind, as he looked on these disgusting and indecent pictures of his race, with far different feelings than they were calculated to engender in a Syud and a true believer.

As he passed on, the tall minarets of the mosque built by Hyder Ali Khan towered above him, which, pierced from top to bottom with pigeon-holes, after the manner of those in Arabia, were surrounded by thousands of pigeons of all colours and kinds, wheeling hither and thither in the air in immense flocks, whilst others sat quietly cooing in the niches and enjoying their abode unmolested. Soon afterwards he emerged from the narrow street into the square, the Futteh Mydan, or plain of victory, on one side of which was the long line of the Sultaun's palace, presenting nothing to the observer but a line of dead wall with many windows, whose closed shutters showed they were the Zenana. Around the gate, however, were many guards dressed in the striped tiger-skin-pattern-calico in use among his body-guard of regular infantry, interspersed with

men in richer dresses and armour,—those of the irregular troops who were permitted to share the watch over the monarch's abode. In the centre of the square were a number of men under instruction, whose evolutions, with the words of command, were quite new to Kasim, and inspired him with great admiration. At the other side of the square the venerable forms of the ancient Hindoo temples reared their huge conical and richly ornamented roofs; and around their massy gates and in the courts lounged many a sleek and well-fed Brahmin, whose closely shaven and shining head, and body naked to the waist—having only a long white muslin cloth tied around his loins, with its end thrown over his shoulder—proved him to be in the service of the enshrined divinity, whose worship was not forbidden by the fanatical ruler of the Fort—nay, it was even whispered, shared in by him.

The Khan's house was not far from the temple, in one of the chief streets; and having announced his arrival to the gate-keeper, Kasim continued riding up and down before it till the Khan should issue forth to accompany him.

This was then the place where Ameena was secured, he thought; the gentle, lovely being on whose fair face his eye had rested only a few times; yet each glance, however short its duration had been, was treasured up in the inmost shrine of his heart. As long as she remained in the camp, he might have an opportunity of seeing her, even though for a moment, and of displaying the scarf she had given to him—a mute evidence which would prove to her she was not forgotten; for he had continued to wear it tied around his chest as at first, even though his slight wound was so far healed as to require nothing but a bandage underneath his vest.

It had been even a comfort to him to watch the arrival of her palankeen daily in the camp, and before that to busy himself in writing the despatch for the Furashes, who prepared the tents for her reception. Sometimes, as she got out of her palankeen, he would catch a glimpse of her muffled figure, or hear the chink of her gold anklets, and even this would be pleasant to him. But now there was no hope; she had passed within those walls

which had, he thought, for ever shut her from his sight; and while his memory was busy with the past, he strove, under the weight of obligation with which the Khan had loaded him, and which that day would be augmented, to drive away the thoughts of his fair wife, not however with the success which ought to have attended his efforts.

Indeed, the beautiful image of her face was too deeply fixed upon his memory; and the fears that her lot, so young and gentle-tempered as she was, in the companionship of her lord's older and ill-tempered wives, would not be a happy one, made him again determine that in need or danger she might rely on one who would be true to her. Every now and then he cast up his eyes to the lattices to see if perchance any one looked out from thence; but there was no one, and he continued his slow pace to and fro.

In a short time, however, his reverie was interrupted by the cheerful voice of the Khan, who, fully armed, was splendidly dressed in a suit of bright chain-armour over a tunic of cloth-of-gold; a highly-polished steel cap glit-

tered on his head, from the sides of which to his neck descended lappets of chain-links strengthened with scales; his long straight sword was suspended in an embroidered baldric, and his waist was girded by a green and gold scarf similar to that Kasim wore. He greeted Kasim heartily.

"By the Prophet! thou art no disgrace to me, and the Ulkhaluk becomes thee; a green mundeel too,—that is well, as thou art a Syud, and hast a right to wear it. I would thou hadst a pair of Persian boots like mine—but no—better as thou art; they would not fit thee, nor suit thy dress. So now let us see thee make my Yacoot bound a little."

As Kasim complied with his request, the delight of the Khan and his retainers, who had now assembled, was extreme; and cries of "Shabash! shabash! Wah wah! Wah wah!" rewarded his exertions; indeed Kasim's horsemanship, like that of most Dekhanie's, was perfect; and he sat his excited horse with the ease and grace of one who was completely at home upon his back, in spite of his extreme spirit and violence.

As the Khan prepared to mount, Kasim happened once more to cast his eyes up toward the lattices which looked into the street: they were guarded with transparent blinds, but nevertheless he thought he could distinguish one or more female figures behind each, and his heart beat very rapidly as he thought—nay was sure—that Ameena beheld him; it was not an unpleasant thought that she looked upon him, richly dressed and accoutred as he was, and had seen him exhibit his spirited horsemanship to the Khan.

Again he looked—and for a moment, with an apparent pretence of arranging the blind, the corner was drawn inwards: a face which was new to him—dark, yet very beautiful—appeared; and a pair of large flashing eyes threw a glance towards him, which met his. It was not Ameena's, and he was disappointed; but he could not the less remember afterwards the glance he had received from eyes so bold and so commanding, and the older yet beautiful face and remarkable expression, and involuntarily sought it again. The Khan, however, at the moment he saw it, called to him to pro-

ceed; and the spearmen and running footmen and grooms having arranged themselves in front, they set forward at a quick pace, followed by the Khan's retainers, who were almost as well mounted, though not so richly clothed, as themselves; those in front shouting the Khan's titles, and clearing the way, often with rude blows of the heavy spear-shafts.

They retraced Kasim's steps through the bazaars, where the profusion of salaams and compliments which greeted them, showed how greatly the Khan was respected and esteemed; and the various cries of the Fakeers, who appealed to him by name as they solicited charity, and mentioned many of his valiant acts in high-flown and laudatory terms, proved how well his brave deeds were known to all. Kasim also came in for his share; and as his connexion with the Khan was mentioned truly, and the subsequent engagement with the Mahrattas, it was plain that it had become known to those rapid acquirers of topics for gossip the Fakeers, and had already become the common talk of the bazaars.

Issuing from the Fort, they escaped from this in a great measure; yet here and there along the road sat a half-naked Fakeer, or Kalundur, with his high-pointed felt-cap, and quilted chequered gown of many colours, who, with a sheet spread before him, upon which was a cup, solicited the alms of the true believers, alternately with prayers, threats, or abuse, as the quality of the passers-by warranted. Instead of taking the road to the right, which led to the camp, they struck off to the left, and after a few minutes' ride arrived at the gate of the garden of the Duria-i-Doulut, or Sea of Wealth, by the river side, where, for the day, the Sultaun held his court.

This palace, which had been erected by his father many years before, stood in the centre of a garden of great beauty, which, from the richness of the soil and plentiful supply of water brought from the river by a deep water-course, flourished in the utmost luxuriance. Large trees, mango and tamarind, walnut, and the sweet-scented chumpa, with many other forest kinds distinguished for their beauty of growth, or the fragrance or luxuriance of their

foliage and blossom, with large clumps of feathering bamboos, overshadowed the broad walks and long green alleys, and in the hottest weather formed an almost impervious shade, while the coolness was increased by the constant irrigation and consequent evaporation from the ground.

Passing through the gate, the Khan and Kasim rode down the avenue, at the end of which was the palace; they could not see the extent of it, nor was there anything remarkable in the outward appearance which corresponded at all with the splendour within. The building was two stories high, the lower of which was occupied by kitchens, halls for servants, and long corridors—the upper contained the rooms of state; a projecting roof, which was supported by carved wooden pillars, formed a deep verandáh, which was occupied by a crowd of persons—servants, and those who attended either with petitions or upon business, and whose rich and gay dresses contrasted well with the dark foliage which almost swept the ground near them.

"Behold the triumph of art!" cried the

Khan, as they dismounted and approached the building, and Kasim could see that the walls were covered with paintings; "there are not such paintings in Hind, thanks to Hyder Ali Khan—may his place in Heaven be blessed, and his grave honoured! Behold the whole of the rout of the kafir English at Perambaukum, where, praise be to Alla! the arms of the true believers were completely victorious, and thousands of the kafirs tasted of death at their hands. Yonder is Baillie and his troops; you can see Baillie in the centre. Mashalla! he was a great man: so indeed he and the other leaders appeared, for they were much larger than the troops. Yonder are the valiant Assud Illahee of the great Hyder, the disciplined troops before which the English battalions are only as chaff; behold, they are advancing to the attack, and bear down all before them. There are the guns too pouring fire on the devoted Feringhees, and the rockets flying in the air, which overwhelm them with confusion. In the midst of the fire the cavalry of the Sircar, led on by the young Tippoo, are charging, and Hyder himself is animating the attack by his presence on his elephant. And look there," he con-

tinued, pointing to another part of the wall, after Kasim had expressed his admiration at the rare skill of the artist, who had delineated so many figures; "that is the end of the affair, as the end of all like affairs ever will be: the kafirs are being cut to pieces, while their blood is poured out upon the earth like water." This indeed was pretty evident from the prostrate forms of the Europeans, and the figures of the Mahomedans hacking at them with swords rather larger than themselves; while large daubs of red paint showed how indeed the blood had been poured forth like water. The figures, being all in profile, had considerably exercised the ingenuity of the artist to express what he meant.

"Alla kureem!" ejaculated Kasim at last, who was mightily struck with the magnitude of the drawings, the lines of charging cavalry, all with their fore feet in the air—the bodies of infantry, which marched in all kinds of lines to the attack with their right legs uplifted—the smoke of the guns that obscured everything—the rockets flying in the air with fiery tails—the elephants, and the General's officers, some of whom were bigger than the elephants they

rode—the horses and their riders—the whole battle, of which, from the peculiarity of the perspective, it was difficult to say whether it was on the earth or in the sky,—" Alla kureem! it was a great battle, and this is a wonderful picture—may the designer's prosperity increase!"

" Ay, you may well say that," continued the Khan; " and behold, here are the Feringhees in captivity, all wounded, but enduring life; there they are, brought before Hyder the victorious, who, seated on his throne, allows the officers to live, while the soldiers he orders to be dispatched to the regions of perdition by the executioner. Yonder are a row kneeling in terror, while the sword is brandished behind them which shall cause them to taste the bitterness of death. There again are others under torture, and those who are spared by the clemency of the exalted in rank, going into a deserved captivity!"

"Those we brought were then some of them," said Kasim.

" No, I think not. I rather believe they were all discharged, or most of them, at the peace, four years ago. These are some who, if I

mistake not, were taken at Bednore, when Mathews was surrounded, and obliged to yield himself to the Sultaun; however we shall soon know, for I have heard that judgment is to be done on them today. But come, the Durbar is open, we have much to do and to see; others are pressing on before us, and we shall lose our place."

So saying, he led the way by one side of the building to a flight of broad stairs under the cover of a verandah, and they ascended amidst the crowd of courtiers and military officers who were thronging to the Durbar; for proclamation was being made as they waited without, and the cries of the Chobdars of "Durbar-i-Aum! Durbar-i-Aum!" announced to all that the Sultaun had taken his seat. The head of the stairs opened at once into the hall of audience, so that when they reached the top the scene burst fully upon them. To the Khan there was nothing new in it; but to Kasim, who had never seen anything grander than his own village, or at most the town of Adoni, the effect was dazzling and overpowering.

The room was large, but low in its propor-

tions. The walls were of that beautiful stucco which is only to be seen in perfection in the south of India, and which, from its high polish and exquisite whiteness, so nearly resembles the purest marble. This was wrought into most elaborate designs of arabesque work; and the sharp edges of every flower, leaf and line were picked out with a faint line of pure vermilion, here and there relieved with gold, which gave a peculiar but agreeable effect to the ornament. In the niches and compartments into which the walls were divided, upon the deep cornices, and especially around the open arched windows, the patterns were more intricate and delicate than elsewhere. The windows themselves were without frames, and were open to the garden, which in all its beauty and luxuriance could be seen through them; and they admitted the cool breeze to play through the room, which otherwise, from its crowded state, would have been insufferably hot. Heavy purdahs, or gilded curtains of crimson cloth, hung above them, which could be let down so as to exclude the air completely if required. The ceiling was covered with fret-work and ara-

besque patterns of stucco in chequers, from the intersections of which depended a small stalactite, decorated like the walls with red and gold; this, while it caused a heavy effect to the room, was nevertheless extremely rich and handsome. The floor was covered with rich carpets to about one half of its length, where commenced a white muslin cloth, on which none dared to venture but those whose rank or station about the monarch entitled them to that honour.

At the further end of the room was a raised dais, which was covered, like the floor, with white muslin; but in the centre of it was a square carpet of rich purple velvet, surrounded with soft cushions, also of velvet, upon which sat Tippoo, alike the pride and the dread of those by whom he was surrounded.

Kasim easily distinguished the bull-slayer of the previous day in the person before him; but he was dressed with extreme plainness in white muslin, and would not have been taken for the Sultaun by a stranger, except from the place he occupied, and the large and peculiarly-formed turban, with which every one was familiar from description.

On each side of him knelt two fair and rosy-faced youths, dressed in gorgeous apparel, the children of Europeans captured on various occasions, who, forcibly converted to Mahomedanism, always attended the Sultaun, and waved chowrees, formed of the white tail of the Tibet cow, with gold handles, on all sides of him, to drive away the flies. On each side of the dais, in semicircles, sat the officers of state and of the army, in their various costumes, leaving an open space in the centre, through which those passed who desired to present their nuzzurs to the Sultaun.

Some French officers were there in glittering uniforms, but whose tight-fitting clothes, bare heads and feet, without boots or shoes, looked meanly amidst the turbaned heads and more graceful costume of the courtiers. Behind all were a number of the royal Chelas, or body-guard, splendidly dressed, and armed to the teeth, whose formidable appearance completely awed the assembly, if indeed the presence of the Sultaun himself was not sufficient to produce that effect.

The figure of the Sultaun was of middle height,

and stout; his complexion was darker than that of most of those who surrounded him, and he sat with an affected air of royalty, which, though it at first impressed the spectator with awe, yet that passed away in a great measure upon the contemplation of his face, which wanted the dignity of expression that his body assumed. His eyes were full and prominent, but the whites of them were of a dull yellowish tint, which, with their restless and suspicious expression, gave them a disagreeable look, and one which bespoke a mind of perpetual but not profound thought; his nose was small and straight, and, with his mouth, would have been good-looking, except for the habitual sneer which sat on both; his eyebrows and mustachios were trimmed most carefully into arched lines, and he wore no beard. In his hand there was a large rosary of beautiful pearls, with emeralds at the regular distances, which he kept perpetually counting mechanically with the fingers of his right hand. Before him lay a straight sword of small size, the hilt of which was inlaid with gold and turquoise stones; and near him stood a gold spitting-cup,

inlaid with precious stones, into which he incessantly discharged the saliva engendered by the quantity of pān he chewed, the red colour of which appeared upon his lips and teeth in a disagreeable manner; and a chased gold writing-case, containing some reed pens, ink, paper, and a pair of scissors to cut it to the sizes required, lay near his left hand.

The ceremony of presentation and of obeisance went on rapidly; almost all offered their nuzzurs of gold or silver, which the Sultaun took, and deposited beside him until there had accumulated a goodly heap. Kasim, at the distance he then was, could catch nothing of the conversation which was going on; for in spite of the loud cries of "Khamosh! Khamosh!" from the attendants, there was more noise in the assembly than he thought befitting the presence of the Sultaun. After waiting some little time, and having advanced nearer and nearer to the musnud, the Sultaun's eye fell upon the Khan, who in truth was a remarkable figure, even among that richly-dressed assembly, being the only one who wore armour. As the Sultaun's eye met his, the

Khan advanced, and bidding Kasim remain where he was till he should be called, he performed his obeisance, presenting, with the handle of his sword upon an embroidered handkerchief, his nuzzur of five gold mohurs, which the Sultaun received most propitiously.

"We welcome thee back, Khan Sahib, most heartily," said the Sultaun; "and it is pleasant in our eyes to see an old friend return in health; but thou art thin, friend, the effects of the journey perhaps. Praise be to Alla! his servant, unworthy of the honour, hath been given power of dreams such as no one else hath enjoyed since the days of the Apostle, on whose memory be peace! We dreamed last night—and the blessed planets were in a most auspicious conjunction, as we learned upon inquiry this morning as soon as we arose, which assures the matter to us—that we should see the face of an old friend, and receive a new servant, who should eclipse all the young men of our court in gallant bearing, bravery, and intelligence."

As he looked around when he had said this, all those within hearing cried, "Ameen! Ameen! who is favoured of Alla like unto the Sultaun?

may he live a hundred years! whose knowledge is equal to his? not that even of Aflatoon or Sikundur."

"Ay," he continued, "behold it hath come true; here has the Khan, as it were, dropped from the clouds, and with him a young man, who, Inshalla! is one whose bravery is great. Bring him forward, O Khan, that our fortunate glance may rest on him."

"May I be your sacrifice, Huzrut!" said the Khan, "he is unworthy the honour; nevertheless, I offer him unto your service, and can answer that he hath as stout an arm and as brave a heart as he looks to have. Mashalla! I have seen both tried, in circumstances of great peril to myself."

"Good!" said the Sultaun, before whom Kasim had performed the Tusleemât, or three obeisances, and now stood with folded hands. "Good! by the Prophet, a fine youth! there is truth on his forehead—his destiny is good."

"Ul-humd-ul-illa! who can discern character like the Sultaun?" cried several; "behold all things, even men's hearts, are open to him."

"He hath lucky marks about his face, only

known to us," continued the Sultaun; "and the planets are auspicious today. A Syud too, his services will therefore be good, and beneficial to himself and us."

"Ul-humd-ul-illa!" cried the court in ecstasy; "what wisdom! what penetration! what gracious words! they should be written in a book."

"Wilt thou take service, youth?" he continued to Kasim; "art thou willing to strike a blow for the lion of the Faith?"

"Huzrut! your slave is willing to the death," cried Kasim enthusiastically; "prove him, he will not be unworthy of such exalted patronage."

"Thou shalt be tried ere long, fear not. Enrol him," he continued to a Moonshee; "let his pay be twelve hoons, with allowance for a horse: hast thou one?"

"The Khan's generosity has already furnished me with one," said Kasim.

"Good! thy business shall be to attend my person, and our friend the Khan will tell thee of thy duties. Enough! you have your dismissal."

"I beg to represent that the Khan escorted

some kafir prisoners from Bangalore," said an officer who was sitting near the Sultaun; "would your Highness like—"

"True, true!" replied the Sultaun; "we had forgotten that;" and he added, as the expression of his countenance changed, "Command silence, and let them be brought into the presence."

CHAPTER VII.

There hardly needed the order to be given that silence should be observed: as the words the Sultaun spoke fell upon the ears of the assembly, and they observed the sudden change in his countenance, the busy tongues ceased directly; there continued a little talking and some bustle towards the end of the room, but as the Chobdars called silence, and went hither and thither to enforce it, all became hushed except the Sultaun himself, who was inquiring from the secretaries whether any despatches had accompanied the prisoners from Bangalore.

"Huzrut!" said the Khan, again advancing, "they are in the possession of your slave, who craves pardon that in the confusion of present-

ing his nuzzur, he forgot to deliver them." And he laid the packets at the Sultaun's feet, who instantly tore open the envelope, and selecting one of the inclosures directed to himself, fell to perusing it with great attention.

"This speaks well of the prisoners," he said at length to Syud Ghuffoor, who sat near him; "the Killadar of Bangalore writes that one of them, a captain, is a man of knowledge, well versed in the science of war and tactics; that he understands fortification and gunnery, so that he is worthy of being offered our clement protection. Inshalla! therefore, though we need no instruction in these matters,—thanks be to Alla, who hath implanted a natural knowledge of them in our heart, which is not surpassed by any of the whoreson Feringhees—"

And all around interrupting him, cried "Ameen! Ameen!"

"Inshalla!" he continued, "as this is an auspicious day, we will offer life and service. If he accept it, well; if not, I will send him to hell, where thousands of his accursed and mother-defiled race await his coming: are not these good words?"

"Excellent—excellent words! They are not worthy to live! the race is accursed of Alla!" cried several; "the Sultaun's clemency is great!"

As this ceased, the tramp of many feet was heard on the wooden staircase, and as the noise approached nearer, Kasim, who had been watching the Sultaun narrowly with intense interest, could see that he was far from being at ease; he fidgeted upon his musnud, the rosary passed twice as fast as usual through his fingers, his eyes winked sharply, and he stroked his mustachios from time to time, either with exultation or inquietude, Kasim could not distinguish which; at length the prisoners reached the head of the stairs, and their escort appeared to wait there for commands.

"Bid the officer advance," said the Sultaun; "the rest may be withdrawn for the present, we will send for them when this man is disposed of."

The order was obeyed, and all were withdrawn but one, who, being desired to come forward through the lane which was opened for him to the foot of the musnud, advanced

slowly, but with erect and manly gait and proud bearing, nigh to where the Sultaun sat.

"Salaam to the light of the world, to the sun of Islam! perform thine obeisance here, and prostrate thyself on the ground," said a Chobdar who accompanied the prisoner.

"I will salute him as I would salute my own monarch," said the prisoner, in a voice audible to all, and in good Hindostanee, but spoken with rather a foreign pronunciation: and still advancing, he had placed one foot upon the white cloth which has been already mentioned.

"Kafir!" cried the Chobdar, striking him, "son of perdition, keep back! dare not to advance a step beyond the carpet; prostrate thyself to the Sultaun, and implore his clemency."

The Englishman turned in an instant, at the blow he had received, and raised his arm to strike again; the Sultaun observed the action, and spoke.

"Hold!" he cried; "do not strike, O Feringhee, and some of ye seize that officious rascal, and give him ten blows upon his back with a cane."

The fellow was seized and hustled out, while

the Englishman continued standing where he had been arrested.

"Advance!" cried the Sultaun.

Some of those near tried to persuade him not to allow the Englishman to approach.

"Pah!" he exclaimed, "I have caused the deaths of too many with arms in their hands, to fear this unarmed wretch. Advance then, that we may speak with thee conveniently; be not afraid, we will do thee no harm."

"I fear thee not, O Sultaun," said Herbert Compton (for so in very truth it was), advancing, and bowing stiffly yet respectfully, "I fear thee not; what canst thou do to me that I should fear thee?"

"I could order thee to be put to death this instant," said the Sultaun sharply, while others cried out fiercely that the speech was insolent, and reviled him.

Herbert looked round him proudly, and many a one among the crowd of flatterers quailed as his clear blue eye rested on them. "I am not insolent!" he exclaimed; "if my speech is plain and honest, take ye a lesson from it, cowards! who could insult one so help-

less as I am;" and he drew himself up to his full height and folded his arms, awaiting what the Sultaun should say to him. His dress was mean, of the coarsest white cotton cloth of the country; his head was bare, and so were his feet; but in spite of this, there was a dignity in his appearance which inspired involuntary respect, nay awe to many.

The time which had elapsed had but little altered him, and if indeed there was a change, it was for the better: his appearance was more manly, his frame more strongly knit. His face was thinner and paler than when we last parted with him at the capitulation of Bednore, from whence, with the rest of his comrades, he had been hurried into captivity; but four years had passed since then, and his weary imprisonment, chequered by no event save the death or murder of a companion or a fellow-captive, would have utterly worn down a spirit less buoyant and intrepid than Herbert's.

Mathews had perished by poison almost before his eyes; he had been accused of having buried treasure, and persisting in the denial of this, he had been tortured by confinement in

irons, denied food, subjected to privations of all kinds, which failing in their effect to force a confession of what had not taken place, he had been poisoned by the Sultaun's order. Numbers had been destroyed; numbers had died of hopelessness, of the climate, of disease engendered by inaction; many had been released at the peace of 1784, but still Herbert and a few of his comrades and fellow-prisoners remained, and had lingered on their wretched existence in the various prisons and forts of the country; for Tippoo hoped that long captivity and hardships at one time, and again indulgence and relaxation, would induce them to accede to his terms of service, which were offered from time to time, with alternate threats of death and promises of immense rewards.

Herbert's situation near the person of the General, and the plans of fortifications, books on the same, works on mathematics, on engineering, and his many drawings, all of which had been seized with him, had early marked him as an officer of superior attainment, and one whose services would be highly valuable. The others

who were confined with him were for the most part men of the artillery, of whose experience and excellent skill as marksmen Tippoo had too often seen the fatal results to his own army not to be very anxious to get them to join him.

A few of the captives, from time to time, dazzled by promises which were never fulfilled and weary of imprisonment, had voluntarily become renegades, and others had been violently converted to Mahomedanism ; these served in the army, and, though dissolute in their habits, were yet useful and brave when occasion needed; and the value of their services only made Tippoo more anxious to secure those of a higher grade and more extensive acquirement and education. With Herbert, and those who accompanied him, his many attempts had been vain ; and while his desire to accomplish his ends became the more violent from their continued opposition, there now existed a necessity for urging their compliance, which will presently be made manifest. But we have digressed.

"Peace !" cried the Sultaun, "we have not sent for thee, O Feringhee, to hear thy bold

speech, but to advise thee as one who is a friend to thee, and hast a true interest in thy welfare."

"Dost thou understand the condescending speech of the Sultaun, or shall one of the Franceese interpret it for thee?" asked one of the Moonshees officiously.

"Peace!" again cried the Sultaun, "he understands me well enough; if he does not, he will say so; and now, Captain Compton, since thus it is written is thy name, we have sent for thee from the Fort, not as a common criminal and one whose end is perdition, but with honour; we had thee seated on an elephant, lodged in a good tent, supplied with excellent food, and now thou art admitted into the presence, thou shouldest bow in acknowledgement of the condescension shown thee; nay, thou wouldst have done so, we are persuaded, but thy manners are not formed upon the model of those of the true believers. Now our good friend the Killadar writes to us that, weary of confinement, and induced by a sense of the obligations thou and thy companions are under to me, thou art in a frame of mind to accept

our munificent offers of entertaining thee in our service, of raising thee to rank, of admitting thee to share—"

"Stop!" cried Herbert suddenly, while, as he spoke, the Sultaun fairly started at the suddenness of the interruption to his harangue and the boldness of the tone. "Stop! when we are on equal terms thou canst offer me service; it is a mockery to tempt me with promises thou wouldst not fulfil."

"By the gracious Alla and his prophet, I would," cried the Sultaun eagerly: "say then, wilt thou serve me? thou shalt have rank, power, wealth, women—"

"I am in your hands, a helpless captive, O Sultaun," replied Herbert; "and therefore I cannot but hear whatever thou choosest to say to me: but if thou art a man and a soldier, insult me no more with such words. Nay, be not impatient, but listen. When Mathews was poisoned by thy order,—nay, start not! thou knowest well it is the truth—I was given the choice of life and thy service, or death upon refusal,—I chose death. Year after year I have seen those die around me whom I loved; I

have courted death by refusal of thy base and dishonourable offers: thou hast not dared to destroy me. My life, a miserable one to me, is now of no value; those whom I love in my own land have long mourned me as dead. It is well that it is so—I am honoured in death. Alive, and in thy service, I should be dead to them, but dishonoured: therefore I prefer death. I ask it from thee as a favour; I have no wish to live: bid yonder fellow strike my head from my body before thine eyes. As thou lovest to look on blood, thou wilt see how a man, and an Englishman, can bear death. Strike! I defy thee."

"Beat him on the mouth with a shoe! gag the kafir son of perdition! send him to hell!" roared many voices; "let him die!" while scowling looks and threatening gestures met him on all sides.

"Peace!" exclaimed the Sultaun, who seeing that his words were not heard amidst the hubbub, rose from his seat and commanded silence. "Peace! by Alla I swear," he cried, when the assembly was still once more, "if any one disturbs this conference by word or deed, I will

disgrace him." And then turning to Herbert, who with glowing cheek and glistening eye stood awaiting what he thought would be his doom, "Fool, O fool!" he cried, "art thou mad? wilt thou be a fool? Thy race mourn thee as dead; there is a new life open to thee, a life of honourable service, of rank and wealth, of a new and true faith. Once more, as a friend, as one who will greet thee as a brother, who will raise thee to honour, who will confide in thee, I do advise thee to comply. Thou shalt share the command of my armies—we will fight together: thou art wise—we will consult together: thou art skilled in science, in which, praise be to Alla! I am a proficient, and we will study together. Alla kureem, wilt thou not listen to reason? Wilt thou refuse the golden path which thine own destiny has opened to thee? Let me not hear thy answer now. Go! thou shalt be lodged well, fed from my own table; in three days I will again hear thy determination."

"Were it three years, my answer would be the same," cried Herbert, whose chest heaved with excitement, and who with some difficulty

had heard out the Sultaun's address. "I defy thee! I spurn thy base and dishonourable offers, with indignation which I have not words to express. When thou canst give me back the murdered Mathews, whose blood is on thy head—when thou canst restore to life those whom thou hast murdered, thrown from rocks, strangled—when thou canst do this, I will serve thee. For the rest, I abhor thy base and unholy faith."

"Hog! son of a defiled mother! vilest son of hell!" screamed the Sultaun, almost speechless with passion, "dost thou dare to revile the faith? Do ye hear him, friends? do ye hear the kafir's words? Have ye ears, and do not avenge me? have ye swords, and do not use them?"

Fifty swords flashed from their scabbards as he spoke, and many were uplifted to strike the daring and reckless speaker, when Kasim, who had been listening with the most intense interest, and remembering his promise of succour, while he felt the high sense of honour which prompted the Englishman's defiance of the Sultaun, rushed forward, and with uplifted arm

staid the descent of the weapons, which would deluged the floor with blood, and committed murder on an innocent person.

"Hold!" he exclaimed, with the utmost power of his strong voice,—"are ye men? are ye soldiers? to cut down a man unarmed, and who is helpless as a woman? Have you no regard for honour, or for truth, when you hear it spoken?

"Rash and foolish youth!" cried the Sultaun; "is this thy first act of service? An act of disrespect and rebellion. And yet I thank thee for one thing—though he whom thou hast saved will curse thee for it—I thank thee for his life, which I have now to torture."

"Thy death, kafir Feringhee," he continued to Herbert, "under the swords of the Moslims would have been sweet and that of a soldier—it shall now be a bitter one. Away with him to the Droog; no matter how he is carried thither, the meanest tattoo, the meanest dooly is enough. Here, do thou, Jaffar Sahib, see this done; travel night and day till it is accomplished: see him and his vile companions, or such of them as will now dare to refuse my

offers, flung from the rock by Kowul Droog, and hasten back to report that they are dead. Begone!"

"Farewell, brave friend," said Herbert to Kasim, as they laid hold on him roughly, and with violent abuse urged his departure; "if we meet not again on earth, there is a higher and a better world, where men of all creeds will meet, but where yonder tiger will never come. Farewell!"

"Say, have I not acquitted myself of my promise to thee?" cried Kasim passionately, for he too was held by the Khan and others.

"Thou hast," was the reply. "May God reward thy intentions—" His last words were lost in the exclamations, threats, and obscene abuse of those who dragged him away.

The Sultaun re-seated himself on the musnud, and the tumultuous heaving of the assembly was after a short while once more stilled. No one spoke, no one dared to interrupt the current of the monarch's thoughts, whatever they might be. All had their eyes fixed upon Kasim, who, held by the Khan and another, waited expecting his doom in silence, but not with

dread: yet his thoughts were in a whirl of excitement; and the remembrance of his mother, Ameena, the Englishman, and the acts of his own life, flashed through his mind, till he could hardly distinguish one from the other. But Kasim's earnest gaze was all the while fixed upon the monarch, who for a few moments was absorbed in a reverie, in which indecision and a feeling of mercy toward the young Englishman appeared to be struggling with the fiercely excited passion which still trembled about the corners of his mouth and his chin in convulsive twitchings. After a little time it passed away, and left only that stern expression which was habitual to him when a sneer did not occupy his features. His eyes had been fixed on vacancy; but on a sudden he raised them up, and they met those of Kasim, who, still held by the Khan, stood close to him.

"Ai Kumbukht!" he exclaimed. "O unfortunate, what hast thou done? By Alla I would have loved thee, only for thy rashness. Knowest thou the peril of coming between the tiger and his prey? Knowest thou that I have but to speak, and, ere thou couldst say thy belief, thy young blood would moisten the grass

yonder? Knowest thou this, and yet didst thou dare to brave me? Alla kureem! what dirt has not been ordained for me to eat today? Whose unlucky face could I have seen this morning when I awoke? Speak, slave! thou art not a spy of the kafir English, that thou wentest beside thyself in his behalf whom we have doomed to death?"

"May I be your sacrifice, O Sultaun!" cried Kasim, joining his hands and addressing Tippoo, "I am no spy—I am not faithless—thou hast the power to strike my head from my body—bid it be done; your slave is ready to die."

"Then why didst thou behave thus?" said Tippoo.

"The Englishman was helpless—he was unarmed—he was my friend—for I rescued him from insult at Bangalore," replied Kasim; "he told me his history, and I grieved for him: he besought me not to enter thy service, O Sultaun, but to join his race. I was free to have done so; but I despised them, and longed to fight against them under the banner of the lion of Islam. I swore to befriend him, however, if ever I could; the time came sooner than I ex-

pected, and in an unlooked-for form; and I had been faithless, craven, and vile, had I failed him when he could not strike a blow in his own defence. This is the truth, O Sultaun! punish me if thou wilt—I am thy slave."

"Unhappy boy," said the Khan to him in a whisper, "thou hast spoken too boldly. Alla help thee, for there is no hope for thee that I can see. See, he speaks to thee."

"Kasim Ali," said the Sultaun, "had one of these who know me dared to do what thou hast done, I would have destroyed him; had any one dared to have spoken as boldly as thou hast done, I would have disgraced him for disrespect. Thou art young—thou art brave; thou hast truth on thy forehead and in thy words, and we love it. Go! thou art pardoned: and yet for warning's sake thou must suffer punishment, lest the example should spread in our army, which—thanks to Alla! who hath given his servant the wisdom to direct and discipline it after a fashion, the perfection of which is not to be met with upon the earth—"

Here he paused, and looked around, and all

the courtiers cried "Ameen! Ameen! listen to the words of wisdom, to the oracle of the faith of Islam!"

"For example's sake," continued the Sultaun gravely, "thou must be punished. We had thy pay written down at twelve hoons—it shall be ten; thou wast to be near my person—thou shalt serve under the Khan, as he may think fit. If thou art valiant, we shall hear of thee with pleasure, and reward thee; and remember our eyes, which are as all-seeing as those of Alla and the angels, will ever be fixed upon thee. Remember this, and tremble while thou thinkest upon it!"

Kasim saluted the monarch profoundly and drew back; he had been rebuked, but mildly, and the honest face of the Khan was once more overjoyed.

"Inshalla! thy destiny is great," he whispered; "now had I, or any one else here, got by any accident into such a scrape, we should have been heavily fined, degraded, and Alla only knows what else; but thou hast come off triumphant, and, as for the loss of the money, thou needest not mind. Alla grant, too, there

may soon be an opportunity of winning fame. Inshalla! we will yet fight together."

Just then the loud cries of "Khamoosh! Khamoosh!" again resounded through the hall, and the Sultaun once more spoke.

"Let every officer inspect his cushoon * minutely during the ensuing month," he said; let the officers of cavalry look well to their horses: let those who have the charge of our invincible artillery look to their carriages and bullocks: let all the departments of the army be in readiness to move at the shortest notice: for we hear of wars against our detachments in Canara, and that the infidel Nairs (may their lot be perdition!) have again taken up arms, and are giving trouble to our troops. Therefore it was revealed to us in a dream, which we have chronicled as it appeared, and with which we will now delight the ears of our people." And feeling under him for a manuscript, he began to read it with pompous gravity."

"On the night before last, soon after this child of clay lay down to rest, an angel of light appeared to him, even like unto the angel Gabriel, as he manifested himself unto the

* A division of troops.

blessed Apostle, (may his memory be honoured!) and of whom this mortal is an unworthy imitator; and the angel said,—'The Nairs in thy dominions are becoming troublesome, therefore shalt thou destroy them utterly; their abominations and the loose conduct of their women are offences against the Most High, therefore they shall be punished,—they shall be all honoured with Islamism.' And so saying the angel vanished, and this servant awoke, and recorded the dream as he had heard it."

"Ajaib! Ajaib! Karamut! Karamut!* The Sultaun is the friend of Alla—the Sultaun is the apostle of Alla!" burst from the assembly, with many other ejaculations equally devout and flattering.

"Yes, my friends, even thus doth the providence of Alla overshadow us," continued the Sultaun, "and enable us to avert the evils which the infidels would bring upon the true faith. Inshalla! however, we will teach them a lesson, and one which they will remember while they have being. I have read you my dream, and behold, in confirmation of it, this morning's

* Wonderful! wonderful! a miracle! a miracle.

post brought letters from Arshed Beg Khan, our governor, which inform us of the disorders, and that he is making head against them with all the force he can muster: therefore we would have you all prepared should reinforcements be needed. And now, Rhyman Khan," he added, "what news hast thou for us from the court of Nizam Ali Khan?"

"Shall I speak it out, Protector of the Universe, or wilt thou hear it in thy closet?" said the Khan advancing.

"Here, friend, here; what secrets have I that my friends about me should not know? Mashalla! in the Sircar Khodadad all is as open as daylight."

Amidst the murmur of applause which this speech produced, the Khan hemmed audibly, to ensure silence, and proceeded.

"I beg to represent," said he, "that Nizam Ali Khan is favourable to the Sircar—entirely favourable. The English pressed him to give up the province of Guntoor, which he is bound to do by treaty; but he is unwilling (and no wonder) to comply; things have advanced to almost a quarrel between them, and if he

was sure of the feeling of this Sircar, I would pledge my life on it that he would declare war tomorrow, and thus the two Sircars could fight under the banner of Islam, and exterminate the unbelievers. But, Inshalla! there will be more proof than my poor words; for I heard from good authority that the Huzoor was about to select an ambassador, a man of tact and knowledge, who will explain all his wishes satisfactorily."

"An ambassador, sayest thou, Khan? By Alla, rare news! He is then in earnest, and with his aid what may not be done? he can bring a lakh of men—cavalry too—into the field, and he has infantry besides. Alla grant he may come soon! let us only chastise these infidel Nairs, and thus make a step towards the extermination of unbelief from Hind. Let the Durbar be closed!" he cried suddenly and abruptly after a short silence; and rising, he retired into one of the smaller rooms, where, alone, he meditated over those wild schemes of conquest which were eventually his ruin.

CHAPTER VIII.

Dragged away by his relentless guards, Herbert Compton had no leisure allowed him to speak with his companions; even the last miserable gratification of a hurried farewell was denied him; and as he passed them, a melancholy group, some standing or leaning against the building, others sitting upon the grass in dejected attitudes, he strove to speak; but every word was a signal for fresh insult, and he was pushed, struck with shoes, spit upon by the rabble of the courtier's servants and grooms, to whom the sufferings of a kafir Feringhee were the highest sport that could be afforded.

A sad spectacle was Herbert's renewed captivity, in insult and suffering, to those of his

fellow-countrymen who beheld it. They had seen him and several others of their body brought from Bangalore in decency, if not with honour; during their journey the utmost indulgence had been shown them, and all their hearts had been buoyant with excitement when Herbert alone had been sent for into the Durbar, for they were well assured that upon his fate would turn the issue of their life or death, continued captivity or release.

There had been many among them who had, in the buoyancy of hope, anticipated a release; before whose minds visions of home, of return to those beloved, to those who had mourned them dead, had been rapidly and vividly passing; who, when a ray of hope had darted in upon their cheerless thoughts, had allowed it to illuminate and warm them till it had induced even extravagancies of behaviour. Some had exulted to their more staid companions; others had sung or whistled joyfully; and the mockery of their guards and of the bystanders only served to excite them the more, and to cause them to anticipate their triumph by words and gestures not to be

misunderstood by those to whom they were addressed. But when Herbert passed out, ruffled, insulted, dragged away without being allowed to exchange a word with them—apparently led to death and followed by the jeers and scoffings of the crowd who thirsted for his blood—then did hope forsake them, and the memory of the deaths of former companions by poison, by torture, or by the executioner, came upon them suddenly, and caused a revulsion of feeling which had an almost deadly effect on the most sanguine. The more sober and less excited exchanged glances and a few words with each other, expressive of their awful situation, and that their last hope had fled.

They were, in bodies of three and four, led before the Sultaun in the evening Durbar, and, like Herbert, offered the alternative of death, or service and life. A few were found to prefer the latter, but by far the greater part braved the tyrant's wrath, and in despair chose to die.

That evening saw the return of a melancholy band to the fort of Nundidroog, the rigours of

the captivity of which had been known to them before by report, as also the fate there of many a brave fellow European and native, boasted to them by their guards in the various forts and prisons in which they had been confined. Nor was it as if they had been led to death at once; those who could speak a few words of the language of the country had implored this of the Sultaun, but had been refused with exultation; and they had to endure a long march of many days, with every hardship and indignity which the unconcealed wrath and spite of the Sultaun, descending almost in a redoubled degree to his subordinate officers, could inflict upon them. Their food was of the coarsest description; bad water, where it could be found, was given them to drink; miserable doolies, in which it was impossible to lie at full length, or even to sit, and open so that the sun beat in on them, were given to some: they were carried too by the inhabitants of the villages, who were pressed from stage to stage, in order that they might travel with the utmost expedition; and as these men were unaccustomed to carry loads in that way, the exhausted men

they bore were jolted, until excess of fatigue often caused faintness and even death. Blest were those who died thus! they were spared the misery the survivors had to endure.

Nor was the person under whose charge they travelled, Jaffar Sahib, one likely to make any amelioration in their condition; he had received his last orders from Tippoo at the evening Durbar, relative to Herbert Compton (in regard to whom his instructions were somewhat different to those the Sultaun had given in the morning), and also to the rest of the prisoners; and well mounted himself, and accompanied by an escort of his own risala, the Jemadar hurried on, travelling the whole day, with but short rests, when the exhaustion of some of the prisoners, or at times the want of a relay of bearers, caused an unavoidable stoppage. Everywhere it was made known that the Feringhees were going to death; and while crowds from many of the villages and towns flocked to see them as they passed by, they were everywhere met by bitter insults, abuse, and derision.

It was a bitter cup to quaff for Herbert

Compton, who, in spite of all, was not cast down. His stout heart on the contrary, prepared for death by long suffering and abandonment of all hope, looked to the termination of his journey with joyful feelings as the time when he should be released from his earthly troubles. Indeed, since the capitulation of Bednore, after they were all led away into captivity,—the frequent disappearance of his comrades and brother officers telling their untimely fates,—he had daily prepared himself for death, not knowing in what hour or by what manner he should be summoned to it. This had lasted so long, that the dim visions of hope which had now and then broken the gloom in which his future was wrapped, so far as life was concerned, were at an end; now a hope of death succeeded, which amounted to a certainty, and was even pleasant in contemplation.

At first, how bitter, how agonizing had been his thoughts of home, of his parents—worst of all, of Amy, whom he could not help picturing to himself as worn down by sorrow, broken in spirit, and mourning his absence, most likely his death, in vain. His mother too, alas! what

a world of thought was there not in her name who had so loved him, and whose tender nature could ill have borne so rude a shock as that of his death, for he was sure they must long ago have abandoned all hope of his being alive. And when at the peace some captives were given up, and it was told that the others were dead, though it was well known in India that there were many retained, yet they would be ignorant of this in England, and would conclude he was dead also. Thus he looked to the future, with a hope, a certainty of reunion in death with those he had best loved on earth, and this made him cheerful and calm, when many around him either held the stern silence of despair or mournfully bewailed their fate.

As they passed Bangalore the Governor visited them, by order of the Sultaun; he had known Herbert, and supplied him with Hindostanee books, which was done by Tippoo's order, that he might in the solitude and ennui of prison-life learn the language of the country, which would fit him for the duties for which he designed him. He was grieved to see him, and advised him to comply with the Sultaun's

request, which Tippoo, knowing that he had been kind to the young Englishman, and thinking he might be able to turn him aside from his purpose, had advanced to him. The brave soldier, who not long afterwards met a warrior's death in defence of the fortress, used his utmost persuasion to alter Herbert's resolution, but in vain,—it was deeply rooted; the alternative proposed was too dishonourable in prospect, and the event so nigh at hand too welcome, for his resolution to be shaken. He bade Herbert farewell, with an expression of deep feeling and interest which gratified him, and which his friend did not seek to disguise. With one or two of the captives, however, the Governor was more successful; the near approach of death, and the inability to look on it continuously for many days, was more than they could bear, and they yielded to solicitation which they little hoped would have been used. There were still a few, however, whom the example of Herbert and their own strong and faithful hearts kept steady to their purpose, men who preferred death to dishonour in the service of their country's foe.

The Killadar caused nearly two days to be spent in the negotiations with the prisoners, in despite of the inquiry of Jaffar Sahib, who pretended to be full of zeal in the execution of the Sultaun's orders; but on the third morning after their arrival, there was no longer pretence for delay, and the party again set forward.

The day after Herbert knew they should arrive at the fort of Nundidroog, and their place of execution was then but at a short distance. Another day, thought he, and all will be over!

Already the dark grey mass of the Fort appeared above the plain as they approached it; its immense height and precipitous sides rose plainly into view. That evening they passed over the large tank to the southward of the Fort on the Bangalore road; and as its huge bulk appeared to sleep peacefully reflected on the waters, making its perpendicular sides and immense height the more apparent, Herbert thought the death to which he was doomed would be easy and sudden, and that it was a more merciful one than that of Mathews, or the lingering torment or strangulation of so many others.

Herbert observed during the journey that the officer who commanded the large party which escorted them kept aloof from him in particular; he had seen him address the others, and heard from them that he endeavoured to reason them into acceptance of the Sultaun's offers: to himself he had never spoken, but concealed his face from him; he had however seen it several times, and on each occasion was inclined to think that it was familiar to him; but, on reflection he could discover no clue to the supposition in his mind, and he vainly strove to dismiss the idea from his thoughts.

The town of Nundidroog was in sight; it was evening, the mountain flung its broad shadow over the plain under the declining rays of the sun, and the warm red light of an Indian sunset covered every object with splendour. The herds of cattle, and of sheep and goats, were hastening home from their pasture with loud lowings and bleatings, and the simple melody of the shepherds' pipe arose, now far away, now near, from the various herds they passed. On their left towered the huge rock almost above

their heads: its fortifications, built on the giddy verge full eight hundred feet above the brushwood and rocky declivity out of which it rose naked, appeared ready to topple over the precipice. There was one huge round bastion in particular on the very edge of the steepest and highest part, and Herbert speculated whether or no that was the spot; he was looking so intently at it, that he did not heed the approach on his right hand of the leader of the party, who, speaking to him suddenly, almost startled him by the familiar accent of his voice.

"Dost thou see yonder bastion, Feringhee?" said the officer, pointing to it,—"yonder round one, from which the flag of the Sultaun floats proudly upon the evening wind?"

"I do," replied Herbert, "it is a giddy place."

"Many a kafir Feringhee," continued the man, "has been flung from thence, while a prayer for mercy was on his lips, and his last shrieks grew fainter and fainter as he descended to perdition: many an unworthy Moslim and kafir Hindoo, taken in arms against the true believers, have wished they had never been born, or had never seen your accursed race,

when he was taken to the edge and hurled over it."

"Death will be easy from thence," said Herbert calmly. "I can look on it, and think on it with pleasure; is that the place where—"

"No," cried the man, exultingly interrupting him, "that is too good for thee and thy obstinate companions. Dost thou see yonder lotos-shaped hill?" And he pointed to one around which the evening vapour was wreathing itself in soft fleecy masses, while the red sunlight lighted up its rugged sides and narrow top.

"I see it," said Herbert.

"Beneath it, continued the man, "there is a rock; thou wilt see it tomorrow—till then farewell."

"Stay!" cried Herbert, "tell me, if thou wilt—for it matters little to one so near death—tell me who thou art; surely I have met thee ere now; thy voice is familiar to my ears."

"Thou shalt know tomorrow," was the only reply the man gave, as he touched the flanks of his horse and galloped to the head of the detachment.

The wearied prisoners were glad when they reached the ancient Hindoo cloisters, where we

have before seen the Khan and Ameena with his risala encamped; and though the evening wind, which had arisen sharply, blew chill around them and whistled through the ruined arches and pillars, they were glad to eat their humble meal of coarse flour cakes and a little sour curds; and wrapping themselves in the horse-cloths which were flung to them out of pity by the grooms, they lay down on the hard ground, each with a stone for his pillow, and exhausted nature claiming its repose they slept soundly.

But Herbert only for a while; he had dreamed vividly and yet confusedly of many things, and at last awoke, fevered and unrefreshed. A jar of water was beside them; he arose, drank some, which revived him, and sat down on a broken pillar, for he could not sleep again; thought was too busy within him. There was no one stirring except the men on watch, who lazily paced to and fro close to him, talking in short sentences: he strove to listen to their conversation.

"And do you think he knows where it is? they say the Feringhees buried it when the place was taken," said one.

"Willa Alum* !" said the other, "the Jemadar says he does, and that he will make him tell where it is before—"

Here Herbert lost the rest, and they did not return to the subject again, but wandered away to others which to him had no interest. The night was very chill, and a keen wind blew, raising the fine dust which had accumulated in the place, and blowing it sharply against his face ; there was something melancholy in the sound, as it whistled and moaned through the ruins, and through the branches of an old blasted peepul-tree, which, blanched with age, stood out a ghastly object against the dark sky. At length, after some time of weary watching, a cock in the town crew ; another answered his call ; and as Herbert looked into the east, the grey flush of dawn was apparent, and he was glad the day had come, though it was to be, as he thought, his last.

The whole party were soon astir, the unhappy sleepers aroused, and, as one by one they awoke to consciousness, with the light that greeted them, miserable thoughts of death poured into

* "God knows !"

their hearts and occupied them to the exclusion of every other idea. One sat motionless, and apparently stupefied, as though he had eaten opium; another prayed aloud wildly, yet fervently; others laughed and spoke with a feverish excitement; and there were one or two who blasphemed and cursed, while they bewailed their early and fearful fate.

For some hours they waited in the cloisters, and the sun was high and bright, ere a body of men on foot, the soldiers of the country, armed with sword and matchlock, marched into it. It was plain that their escort was to be changed, and that the respectable men who had been with them were no longer to accompany them, but had given place to some of the lowest description of Tippoo's troops, who were usually composed of the unclean castes of the country. Their appearance was forbidding, and in vain the prisoners looked for a glance of pity from the half-naked and savage-looking band to whom they were given over; they appeared used to the scenes which were to ensue, and regarded the miserable Englishmen with a cold stare of indifferent curiosity.

But little communication passed between the prisoners; Herbert had for some days spoken to them, and advised them to prepare for death by prayer and penitent confession to God; he had reasoned with several, who had from the first shown a fool-hardy and light demeanour, on the madness of attempting indifference to their fate; but as the time drew near, he was too fully occupied with his own overpowering thoughts to attend to the others, and he had withdrawn to as far a distance as possible from them, where he sat moodily, and contemplated with bitter thoughts his approaching death.

While he was thus occupied the Jemadar entered the court, and having given some orders to the men who remained behind, he directed the legs of the prisoners to be tied. This having been executed, they were placed in the doolies, and the whole again proceeded.

Passing the outskirts of the town of Nundidroog, they travelled for two or three miles through the avenues of mango-trees, which in parts line the road: could they have had thought for anything around them, they would

have admired the varied prospects presented to them by the rugged rocky hills, and their picturesque and ever-varying outlines: but one idea absorbed all others, and they were borne along in a kind of unconscious state; they could see nothing but death, even though the bright sun was in their eyes, and the glad and joyful face of nature was spread out before them.

At length the leading men turned off the road by a by-path towards a huge pile of rocks in the plain, about half a mile distant, and the others followed; it was plain to all that this was their destination. Then flashed across their minds that the rock was not high enough to cause death instantaneously; and while some demanded in haughty words of expostulation to be taken to the Fort itself, or to the summit of the conical mountain, which arose precipitously on their right hand,—others besought the same with piteous and plaintive entreaty, in very abjectness compared with their former conduct. They might as well have spoken to the wind which blew over them in soft and cool breezes as if to soothe their excited and fevered frames.

Ignorant of the only language of which the Europeans could speak a few words, the rude soldiers listened with indifference, or replied with obscene jests and mocking gestures and tones.

They reached the foot of the rocks; the bearers were directed to put down the doolies, and the prisoners were dragged from them with violence. A few clung with fearful cries to the wretched vehicle, which had been their wearisome abode for so many days, and one or two resisted, with frantic efforts, to the utmost of their power, the endeavours of their guards to lead them up the narrow pathway; they were even wounded in their struggles; but the men they had to deal with were far stronger than the attenuated Europeans, and had been accustomed to the work too long to heed cries or screams; they were the far-famed guard of the rock, even now remembered, who had been selected for their fierce behaviour, strength, and savage deportment, to carry into execution the decrees of the Sultaun.

All the while they had been accompanied by the Jemadar, who, having ridden in advance of

the party, now awaited their coming at the top of the rock. Herbert was the first who arrived there, led by the rope which, tied to both his arms, was held by one of the guards, while others with drawn swords walked on each side of and behind him. He had been cast down in heart since the morning, and faint and sick at heart; but now his spirit seemed nerved within him. One plunge, he thought, and all would be over; then he should be released from this worse than death. Prayer too was in his heart and on his lips, and his soul was comforted, as he stepped firmly upon the level space above and looked around him.

The Jemadar was there, and a few other soldiers; the terrace was a naked rock, which was heated by the sun so that it scorched his bare feet. There were a few bushes growing around it, and on one side were two mud houses, the one close, the other open for the guard. Besides these, there was a hut of reeds, which was used as a place for keeping water.

"Thou art welcome, captain," said the Jemadar with mock politeness. "Art thou ready to taste of the banquet of death?"

"Lead on," said Herbert firmly, "and molest me not by thy words. I am ready."

"Not so fast, sir; the Sultaun's orders must first be obeyed. Say, art thou ready to take his service, or dost thou refuse?"

"I have already told him my determination, and will waste no words upon such as thee," was Herbert's reply.

"It is well!" said the Jemadar, "thou wilt learn ere long to speak differently:" and he turned away from him to where several of the others were now standing. He regarded them for a few minutes steadily and exultingly, as one by one the miserable beings were led up; and some, unable from mental and bodily exhaustion to support themselves, sunk down on the rock almost insensible.

There was one youth, a noble and vigorous fellow. Herbert had remembered him when he was first brought to Bangalore from some distant fortress,—high-spirited and full of fire, which even captivity had not tamed. But the long and rapid journey, the bad food, the exposure to scorching heat and chilling dew, had brought on dysentery, which had exhausted

him nigh to death. He was almost carried by the guards, and set down apart from the rest. His languid and sunken eye and pallid cheek told of his sickness; but there was a look of hope in the glance which he cast upwards now and then, and a gentle movement of his lips, which showed that his spirit was occupied in prayer.

The Jemadar's eye rested on him. "Let him be the first—he will die else!" he cried to some of the guards, who, having divested themselves of their arms, stood ready to do his bidding.

A cry of horror burst from the group of Englishmen. There were two or three of the strong men who struggled firmly with their captors, as their gallant hearts prompted them to strike a blow for their suffering comrade. But, bound and guarded, what could they do?

They saw the young man lifted up by two of the executioners, and borne rapidly to the further edge of the rock, not twenty yards from them. He uttered no cry; but looking towards them sadly, he bade them farewell for ever, with a glance even more eloquent than

words. Another instant, and he was hurled from the brink by those who carried him.

Almost unconsciously each bent forward to catch even a passing sound, should any arise; and there was a dead silence for a few moments, as the men who had done their work leaned over the edge to see if it had been surely effected. But none arose: the sufferer had been quickly released from his earthly pain.

"Dost thou see that, Captain Compton?" said the Jemadar. "Thy turn will come."

"Now," was the reply; "I am ready." And Herbert hoped that his turn would be the next. His energies were knit, and his spirit prepared for the change.

"Not yet," said the Jemadar: "I would speak with thee first. Lead the rest away into the house yonder," he continued to the guard, "loose them, and lock the door." It was done, and Herbert alone remained outside.

"Listen!" he said, addressing Herbert, "dost thou remember me?"

"I said before that I thought I knew thee; but what has that to do with death?" said Herbert.

"I am ready to die; bid thy people do their office."

"That will not be for many days," he replied; "I have a long reckoning to settle with thee."

"For what? I have never harmed thee."

"When Mathews was in Bednore, and there was alarm of the Sultaun's coming, thou didst suspect me, thou and another. Thou didst insult and threaten to hang me. We are even now,—dost thou understand?"

"What! Jaffar Sahib, the guide, the man who betrayed the salt he ate?"

"Even so. Ye were owls, fools, and fell into the snare laid for you."

"Has thy resentment slumbered so long then?" said Herbert. "I pity thee: thy own heart must be a hell to thee."

"Kafir! dare to speak so again, and I will spit on thee."

"It would befit thee to do so; but I am silent," was Herbert's reply.

"Where is the money that thou and that old fool, who is now in perdition, buried in Bednore? Lead me to it, and I will save thy life. The coast is near, and thou canst escape. Fear

not to speak,—those around do not understand us."

"Thy master has been told by me, by Mathews, who lost his life in that cause, and by every one, that there was none but what he found. We hid no money—thou well knowest this: why dost thou torment me?"

"Thou wilt remember it in three or four days, perhaps," said the man; "till then I shall not ask thee again. Go to the company of thy people."

Herbert's mind had been strung up to its purpose, and he coveted death at that moment as the dearest boon which could have been granted. But it was denied him; and he could only gather from the leader of the party that further suffering was in store for him. In spite of his utmost exertions to repel the feeling, despondence came over him,—a sickening and sinking of his heart, which his utmost exertion of mind could not repel.

The day passed away, and the night fell. As the gloom spread over their narrow chamber, the men, whom the light had kept silent or cheering each other, now gave way to su-

perstitious terrors; and, as they huddled together in a group, some cried out that there were hideous spectres about them; others prayed aloud; and those who were hard of heart blasphemed, and made no repentance. As night advanced, some yelled in mental agony and terror, and the thought of those who were to die on the morrow appalled every heart. None slept.

Four days passed thus; on every morning a new victim was taken, while the rest were forced to look on. Sometimes he went gladly and rejoicing, sometimes he had to be torn from his companions, who in vain strove to protect him: two suffered passively—two made desperate resistance, and their parting shrieks long rang in the ears of the survivors. On the fourth day the Jemadar arrived. "Come forth," he said to Herbert, "I would speak to thee. Wilt thou be obdurate, O fool? wilt thou longer refuse to tell of the money, and the Sultaun's benevolence? Bethink thee."

"Thou couldst not grant me a greater favour than death," said Herbert; "therefore why are these things urged. If there was money hidden

thou shouldst have it; I know it is thy god. But there is none, therefore let me die. I tell thee once for all, I spurn thy master's offers with loathing."

"Dost thou know what this death is?" said the Jemadar—thou shalt see." And he called to several of the guards who stood around. Herbert thought, as they led him to the brink, that his time was come. "I come, I come, Amy!" he cried aloud—"at length I come! O God, be merciful to me!"

They led him passively to the brink; the Jemadar stood there already; it was a dizzy place, and Herbert's eyes swam as he surveyed it.

"Thou art not to die, Feringhee," said the Jemadar; "but look over. Behold what will be thy fate!"

Herbert obeyed mechanically, and the men held him fast on the very verge, or the temptation would have been strong to have ridden himself of life. He looked down: the hot and glaring sunlight fell full on the mangled remains of his comrades, which lay in a confused heap at the bottom; a hundred vultures were

scrambling over each other to get at them, and the bodies were snatched to and fro by their united efforts. The Jemadar heaved a fragment of rock over, which, rebounding from the side, crashed among the brushwood and the obscene birds; they arose screaming at being disturbed, and two or three jackals skulked away through the brushwood. But Herbert saw not these; the first glance and the putrid smell which came up had sickened him, weak and excited as he was, and he fainted.

CHAPTER IX.

"He has fainted, or is dead," cried the men who held him to the Jemadar, who was busied in heaving over another fragment of rock. "He has fainted; shall we fling him over?"

"For your lives do not!" cried the Jemadar; "draw back from thence—let us see what is the matter."

They obeyed him, and laid Herbert down softly upon the rock, while the Jemadar stood over him. His hand was powerless and cold, his face quite pale, and he looked as though he were dead.

"He has cheated us," said the Jemadar

to those around; "surely he is dead. Who prates now of the valour of the Feringhees? Even this leader among them could not look on a few dead bodies without fainting like a woman: Thooh! I spit on the kafirs: I marvel that the Sultaun so desires him to enter the service, and is at such trouble about him."

"He will die," said one of the men, "his hand grows colder and colder."

"He must not die yet, Pochul," said Jaffar Sahib; what would the Sultaun say to us? Away! get some water; he may revive. This is only a faint, the effect of terror; he will soon speak again."

The man obeyed the order, and brought water. They dashed some on Herbert's face, and opening his lips poured some between his tightly closed teeth. But it was in vain; he moved not, nor showed signs of life for a long while; and was it not that his body continued warm, they would have thought him dead. At length he sighed, and opening his eyes gazed wildly around him. The effort was greeted with a shout from those about him, which he

appeared not to hear, but sank back again insensible. Again they essayed to revive him as they best could; and after a long time partially succeeded as before; but it was only to see him relapse again and again. Once or twice he spoke, but incoherently.

For some hours he continued thus. At last a violent shivering commenced; and seeing him so affected (for the Jemadar had left them for a while, having given the men strict orders to look carefully to Herbert, and to remove him to their guard-house), as they were aware he was a person of more than ordinary consequence, they used what means they could to alleviate his sufferings. One lent him his rozaee, or quilted counterpane; another kneaded his limbs or chafed his hands; a third heated cloths and applied them to his back and head. But it was in vain: the shivering continued, accompanied at times with dreadful sickness. After being in this state for awhile, he broke into a violent heat—a burning, exhausting heat—which excited him furiously. Now he raved wildly: he spoke sometimes in English, sometimes in Hindostanee; and as none of the men

around him understood either, they held a hurried consultation among themselves, and came to the resolution of selecting one of the prisoners to remain with him, and minister to his wants. The office was gladly accepted by the man they chose, whose name was Bolton, and whom they fixed on because he had been seen in conversation with Herbert more than the rest, and could speak a few words of their language, Canarese, which he had learned where he had been last confined.

All that night was passed by the unfortunate young man in violent raving, the consequence of the raging fever which consumed him. He tossed incessantly to and fro in the small corded bed upon which he had been laid; now yelling forth, in the agony he suffered from his head, which he held with both his hands; and now moaning piteously, so that even the rough guards felt compassion for the young and helpless Englishman. "Water!" was the only coherent word he could utter; the rest was a continued unintelligible muttering, in which some English words and names were sometimes faintly discernible.

Poor Bolton did what he could, but it was in vain; and when the Jemadar returned in the morning for the purpose of adding another victim to his last, he found Herbert in such a state as to alarm him; for the Sultaun had sworn he would have life for life if ought happened to him.

"He must be removed instantly," he said. "Away, one of ye, for a dooly! Bring it to the foot of the rock—we will carry him down thither, and he must be removed to the town."

In the end too he was merciful, for he took Bolton with him to attend on Herbert while he should live; it could not be long he thought, for he raved incessantly, until exhaustion ensued and he gained fresh strength for further frantic efforts.

And they left the fatal rock soon afterwards, the only two of that numerous company alive; nor was the fate of the rest long protracted. They were murdered as the rest had been; and the bleached bones and skulls, and fragments of clothes which had no shape to tell to whom they had belonged—for they had been stripped

from the dead by the beaks of vultures and teeth of jackals—proved to those who long afterwards looked on the place, that the tales they had heard of the horrors of that fatal rock, and which they had in part disbelieved, were not unfounded.

It was on a mild and balmy evening that Herbert awoke to consciousness, about a week after he had been removed. He looked languidly around him, for he was so weak that even the effort he made to raise himself caused a giddy faintness; and for an instant the remembrance of his last conscious moment upon the brink of the precipice flashed across his mind, and he shuddered at the recollection of what he had seen. Again he looked around, but he was not upon the rock; the fatal and wretched abode in which he had passed five days—such days of enduring agony as he could not have believed it possible to sustain—with its bare walls scrawled all over with the names of its miserable inhabitants, and their care-worn, despairing, and almost maniac faces, were around him no longer. He lay in the open air, under the shade of a wide-spreading peepul-tree, upon a

mound of earth surrounding a tomb; which, from its clean white-washed state, and the garlands of flowers which hung upon it, was evidently that of a Mahomedan saint or holy martyr. At a short distance was a small mosque, exquisitely white and clean, behind which rose some noble tamarind-trees, and with them cocoa-nut and plantains, which formed an appropriate background to the pureness of the building, their foliage partly shaded and intermingled with the minarets and ornamented pinnacles of the mosque. Before it was a little garden, where flourished luxuriantly a pomegranate-tree or two, covered with their bright scarlet blossoms—a few marigolds and cocks-combs, intermixed with mint and other sweet herbs, which appeared to be cultivated with care. The space around the tomb and before the mosque, and for a considerable extent all round, was carefully swept; and the branches of the peepul and tamarind trees, which met and interweaved high above, formed a cover impenetrable by the rays of the fiercest sun at noon-day; but it was now evening, and the red light streamed in a flood between the stems of

the trees, lighting up the gnarled branches of the peepul and the thick foliage beyond. Innumerable parroquets and minas screamed and twittered in the branches above him, and flew from place to place restlessly: but the only sound of man was from one drawing water for the garden, by the aid of the lever and bucket common to Mysore, whose monotonous yet not unmusical song and mellow voice ceased only to allow the delicious sound of the rush of water to reach Herbert's ear, as the bucket was emptied from time to time into the reservoir which supplied the garden.

He lay in a half unconscious state, in that dreamy langour, which, when fierce fever has subsided, is almost painful from its vagueness; when the mind, striving to recall the past, wanders away into thoughts which have no reference to it, but which lose themselves in a maze of unreal illusions too subtle and shifting to be followed, and yet too pleasant to excite ought but tranquil images and soothing effects.

The sun sank in glory,—in such glory behind the mountains beyond as Herbert had never before witnessed, save once, when he was at

sea, and the land which held him a prisoner, and was his living grave, appeared in sight. As the evening fell, and the golden tints of the west faded, giving place to the rich hues of crimson and purple which spread over it, the sonorous voice of the Muezzin, from a corner of the enclosure, proclaimed the evening worship; and in the melancholy yet melodious tone of the invitation, called the Believers to prayer. A few devout answered to it, and advancing from one side, performed their ablutions at a little fountain which cast up a tiny thread of spray into the air; this done, they entered the mosque, and, marshalled in a row, went through, with apparent fervour, the various forms and genuflexions prescribed by their belief.

Afterwards two advanced towards Herbert,—one, a venerable man in the garb of a Fakeer, the other a gentleman of respectable appearance, who, from the sword he carried under his arm, might be an officer.

Herbert heard one say, "Most likely he is dead now; he was dying when we last saw him, and his attendant went with Jaffur Sahib to

purchase his winding-sheet; poor fellow, he was unwilling to go, but the Jemadar forced him away."

"I have hope," said the old Fakeer, "the medicine I gave him (praised be the power of Alla!) has rarely failed in such cases, and if the paroxysm is past he will recover."

Herbert heard this and strove to speak; his lips moved, but no words followed above a whisper: he was weaker than an infant. But now the Fakeer advanced to him and felt his hand and head; they were cool and moist, and Herbert turned to look on them with a heart full of gratitude at the kindness and interest which their words and looks expressed.

"Ya Ruhman! ya Salaam! Oh he lives! he is free from the disease (blessed be the power of Alla!)—he is once more among the living. Therefore rejoice, O Feringhee," exclaimed the Fakeer, "and bless Alla that thou livest! for he hath been merciful to thee. Six days hast thou lain in yonder serai, and the breath was in thy nostrils, but it hath now returned to thy heart, so be thankful."

"I am grateful for thy kindness, Shah Sahib," said Herbert, speaking very faintly,—for he had learned the usual appellation of all respectable Fakeers long before—"Alla will reward thee; I pray thee tell me who thou art, and where I am. Methinks I was—"

"Trouble not thyself to think on the past," he replied; "it was not destined to be, and thy life is for the present safe; thou art in the garden of the poor slave of Alla and the apostle, Sheikh Furreed, of Balapoor."

"A worthy Fakeer, and one on whom the power to work miracles hath descended in this degenerate time," said his companion; "one who may well be called 'Wullee,' and who will be honoured in death."

"I have an indifferent skill in medicine," said the Fakeer; "but to the rest I have no pretensions, Khan Sahib; but we should not speak to the youth; let him be quiet; the air will revive him; and when they return he shall be carried back to the serai."

They left him; and ere long he heard footsteps approaching; a figure was running to-

wards him—he could not surely be mistaken—it was an English face: he came nearer—it was Bolton.

The poor fellow sobbed with very joy when he saw his officer released, as it were, from the jaws of death; he hung over him, and bathed his hand with tears; he little expected ever to have heard him speak again. Now his officer lived, and while a load of sorrow was removed from his heart, he blessed God that he had been so merciful.

"I have carried you forth day by day in my arms, and laid you yonder," said the faithful fellow, as he lifted him up like a child: "they said you would die, and I thought if you were sensible before that time came, you would like to be in this shady cool place, where the light would not be too strong for you, the fresh air would play over you, and you could look around upon the green trees and gardens ere you went hence."

Herbert could only press his hand in silence, for his heart was too full to speak; indeed he was too weak also; for in being carried to the serai once more, he fainted, and it was long ere

he recovered. But that night a few mouthfuls of rice-milk were given him, and he slept peacefully,—that noiseless, almost breathless sleep, which is attendant on extreme weakness, when dreams and pleasant phantasies flit before the imagination like shadows chasing each other over beautiful prospects, when the day is bright and soft. Herbert's visions were of home, of walks in the twilight with Amy, of her soft words, of the plashing of the river in their well-known haunts, sacred to him by the dearest and holiest ties,—and he woke in the morning refreshed and strengthened.

He could now speak; he could converse with the soldier who had watched over him so devotedly, and he learned from him all that had occurred.

"You were delirious, sir," he said; "and I was sent for from among the rest; poor fellows! I hear they are all murdered. I thought you had been struck by the sun, for you were bareheaded; perhaps it was so, for you were quite mad and very violent. They brought you here in the dooly, which was sent for by the Jemadar, and at first no one would receive you.

You lay raving in the bazaar, and people avoided you as they would have done a devil,—they even called you one. But the good Fakeer who lives here saw you by chance, and took you away from them, and he has watched you and given you various medicines, which have made you I fear very weak, sir; but you are better now."

"So they were all murdered," said Herbert, his thoughts reverting to the past.

"They were, sir; but why think of that now? it will distress you—you should not; there are brighter things in store for you, depend on it."

"Alas!" said Herbert, "I fear not, Bolton; but since God has spared me from that death, and protected me through this dreadful illness, of which I have a confused remembrance, surely it is not too much to hope."

And he did hope, and from his soul he breathed a fervent prayer; for through the future there appeared a glimmering ray of hope on which his mind loved to rest, though clouds and dark vapours of doubt and uncertainty would rise up occasionally and obscure it. Day by day, how-

ever, he recovered strength, and the old Fakeer sate by him often, and beguiled the time with tales and legends of the mighty of the earth who were dead and gone. It was a dreamy existence, to live weak and helpless among those shady groves, to lie for hours listening to the ever-sighing trees, as the wind rustled through their thick foliage, watching the birds of varied plumage as they flitted among their branches, while his ear was filled with wild legends of love, of war, of crime, or of revenge.

But this had an end—it was too bright, too peaceful to last. When a week had elapsed, the Jemadar who had avoided him studiously during his recovery, came to him with the Fakeer; for knowing Herbert's detestation of him, he had not dared to venture alone.

"The Jemadar hath news for thee, my son," said the old man; "fear not, he will not harm thee—I would not let him do so. He hath shown me the Sultaun's letter to him, which arrived a short time ago by an express."

"Listen, Feringhee!" said Jaffur Sahib; "the Shah Sahib will bear me witness that there is no wrong intended thee; my royal master doth

but seek his own, and still asketh thee for the treasure."

"Shah Sahib," said Herbert, "hear me say, and be witness, that as Alla, whom we both worship, sees my heart, that it is pure of deceit,—I know nought of it. Unlike those who loaded themselves with money, and plundered the treasury at Bednore, I and a few others never touched it. Canst thou not believe that, to save my life, I would have told if I had known aught of it?"

"I believe that thou wouldst, my son, but—"

"There must have been lakhs of money and jewels buried there or destroyed," said the Jemadar; "else, where is the treasure? Every one was searched, and yet not half was found that I myself saw there before—"

"Before what?" asked the Fakeer, whose curiosity was raised.

"Let him tell his own tale of shame if he can," said Herbert; "I would not so humble him, though he is my enemy, for some reason that I know not of."

"Thou knowest well I have cause to be so,"

said the Jemadar, with bitter rancour in his tone; "but this is foolishness; here is the Sultaun's letter; thou must either tell of the treasure, or go again into confinement;—tell of it, and thou wilt be freed and sent on an embassy to thine own people,—refuse, and the alternative is thy doom. Choose then—in this at least there is no tyranny."

"Alas! I am but mocked," said Herbert sadly; "I have given thee my answer so many times, that this is but torment, exciting hope that makes me dream of joy I can never realize. My own people—alas! to them I am dead long ago, and— But why speculate? I tell thee before this holy witness, my kind and benevolent friend, that I have no other reply to give than that thou knowest."

"It is well, Sahib,—thy fate is cast; the old prison at Bangalore awaits thee, where, if Alla give thee long life, thou art fortunate, but where speedy death will be thy most probable fate."

"It will be welcome," said Herbert; but while I have life, I will remember thee, O Fakeer, who hast been to me a friend in

bitter adversity, when to all others I was accursed. When am I to travel?"

"Tomorrow," replied the Jemadar; the letter is peremptory, if thou art strong enough to bear the journey."

"He is not," said the Fakeer, "he is still weak. On my head be the blame of his remaining longer."

"No," said Herbert, "I am feeble, it is true, but let it be as the Sultaun wills. I am too long accustomed to hardship, to resist or object; and thou, my friend, wouldst only bring down his wrath upon thee by keeping me here: yet think, when I am gone, from this our short acquaintance, that our race can be grateful, and when thou hearest us reviled, say that we are not as our slanderers speak of us. For myself, while I have life, I will remember thee as a kind and dear friend; and if Alla wills it, we may meet again."

"If Alla wills it?—Ya Moojeeb!* ya Kubeer!† ya Moota-alee!‡ grant that it may be, that we may meet again."

* O answerer of prayer! † O Lord of power!
‡ O most sublime!

And, full of regret, of pain at parting with his old and true friend,—even shedding tears, for he was weak in body and in mind, as he left those quiet, peaceful groves and green shades, —with the memory of his fearful illness, his kind nursing, and the devotion of their possessor fresh and vivid in his thoughts,—Herbert left the place the next day, accompanied by his comrade in captivity, whose only hope now was, that they should never again be separated. In the secrecy of friendship, he had procured a pen and paper from the old Fakeer, and had written a few lines to the Governor of Madras, stating who he was, and that he still lived; this the old man promised to send whenever an opportunity occurred; but he was over-cautious, Herbert thought, and there was but little hope that it would ever reach its destination.

The journey did not fatigue him as he had expected; in contrast to the hurried travel in coming, they returned to Bangalore in three days, and Herbert was even stronger and better for the exertion. He expected once more his old cell, and the company of books, even some-

times a word with his kind friend the Killadar: but there was another trial in store for him, of which he could have had no idea,—it was terrible in contemplation.

It would seem as if the capricious mind of the Sultaun was never settled to one point about Herbert; order after order was revoked, and others substituted; the last, which met him at Bangalore, was that Herbert should be taken to a solitary mountain fortress beyond Mysore, in a region which was known to be inclement, and from whence tidings of his existence could never find their way. He had been passive in the hands of his captors now for years, and this fresh mark of tyranny was nothing new, nor the changes in the Sultaun's designs for him to be wondered at. A few days' delay occurred at Bangalore, where some suits of coarse but thickly quilted clothes were given to him, two or three blankets, a counterpane, and a few other necessaries; and he once more journeyed onwards. A bitter pang to him was the loss of his faithful friend and attendant Bolton, who was not permitted to accompany him. They separated in sorrow,

but they exchanged written memoranda of each other's history, to be made known to their countrymen in case either had ever an opportunity.

Herbert travelled many days; following at first the road to Seringapatam, the party struck off to the left when near the city; there he was rid of the hateful presence of the Jemadar, who to the last urged him to confess the existence of the treasure, and repeated his offers of conniving at his flight, should he disclose it.

At length a blue wall of mountains appeared in the far distance; their bases were wreathed with vapours, which rolled along their sides but never appeared to reach the summit. Day after day, as they approached them nearer, their giant forms displayed themselves in grander and more majestic beauty. What had appeared chasms and rents in their sides, when the light rested on them, now revealed valleys and thickly wooded glens, into which imagination strove to penetrate, in speculation of their real loveliness.

At length they reached the pass, which from

the table-land of Mysore descends into the plain of Coimbatoor; and from thence the boundless prospect which met Herbert's eye filled his mind with delight and rapture. The blue distance melted into the sky, by a succession of the tenderest tints: away through the plains rolled the Bhowanee, a silver thread glittering amidst the most exquisite colours. The huge mountains were on his right,—blue and vast—their rugged sides, here hewn into deep chasms, and again clothed with woods of a luxuriance which he had never before seen equalled. In the distance of the lofty chain, one mountain of peculiar form, whose sides were naked precipices, stood out boldly against the blue plain. The soldiers pointed to it exultingly, and when he asked them the reason, he was told that it was his destination.

They descended; everywhere the same noble views, the same glory of the works of Heaven, which Herbert worshiped in his heart, met his gaze. Having passed along the foot of the mountains for two days, and approached them nearer and nearer, they began to ascend.

Below the rugged pass, the mighty forests, the huge bamboos, the giant creepers, and their lovely flowers, had filled Herbert's mind with wonder and awe; as he ascended, this gave place to feelings of delight. The path was rugged and stony, and the poney he rode, (for which the dooly had been exchanged beneath the pass) climbed but slowly, and he was obliged to rest him occasionally, while he turned round to enjoy the mighty prospect. How grand it was to see the high table-land of Mysore breaking into the plain in mountains of four thousand feet high, of every conceivable form, and bathed in the bright light of an Indian sun, while the boundless plains stretched away from their feet!

As he ascended, the air blew cooler and cooler, and plants and beautiful flowers new to him grew profusely by the way-side; at last he saw—he could not be mistaken—some fern! How his heart bounded as he plucked it, and kissed its well-remembered form. A little higher there was a bed of blue flowers peering from among the luxuriant shrubs; they had familiar faces,—he stopped, and dismounting

ran to them. They were violets,—the same as those with which he had a thousand times filled his Amy's lap in summer time, when they were children;—how full his heart was!

Further on, a brake of brambles met his eye; the ripe black fruit was a luxury to him, such as he had not dreamed of; and below them a bed of wild strawberries, the same as they had grown in the Beechwood groves and round the Hermitage. He was now near the summit; the air was cold and fresh like that of England, the sky was bluer than below, and a few light fleecy clouds floated about the mountain-top, veiling its beauty. They still advanced, and he was in rapture: he could not speak, his thoughts could only find vent in thanksgiving. A familiar flower caught his eye in a bush above his head; it was woodbine—the same, and as fragrant, as in England. Herbert's heart was already full to overflowing, and thoughts of the past increased by these simple objects were too powerful for him to bear calmly; he could resist nature's best relief no longer, and wept—tears which soothed him as they flowed; and while he sate down, and with dim and streaming

eyes gazed over the almost boundless prospect, he felt that if he could have passed away to another existence with those feelings, it would have been bliss.

CHAPTER X.

Some years have now elapsed since Philip Dalton parted from his friend Herbert at Bednore, upon the mission of the unfortunate Mathews; and it becomes necessary to revert to him for a while, in order to present successively the various events which belong to our history, in such a manner as may best serve to fix them upon the reader's attention, and which from their connection, though at considerable distances of time, it is needful to follow to the end in their true order.

Philip's journey to the coast was rapid, but he had time once more to tread the ground which was the scene of that spirited conflict,

once more to visit the grave of his young companion, which was undisturbed; and he saw with satisfaction that the simple monument which they had ordered to be erected over it, to preserve it from being molested as well as to mark the place, was in a state of forwardness and would soon be finished. In a few days more the party were at the coast, and finding vessels there belonging to the Government, they embarked, and with the soft and favourable breezes of the season soon reached their destination in safety.

Here now ensued a scene of bitter contention among the friends of both parties, and opinions ran high on both sides. While the one urged the incompetency, the neglect of orders and caution, and the obstinacy of Mathews, in not listening to the advice of those well-calculated by their rank and experience to give it, there were also those who argued, that in all his acts Mathews was fully justified,—that, should disaster come, the Government of the island was alone to blame, in having directed him to undertake operations of such magnitude with means so

insignificant, which, though they had been eminently successful, he could not be expected to maintain without large and speedy reinforcements.

Before the council, however, the affairs were argued with calmness and temper; the letters of Mathews certainly threw no light upon his position, his means of defence or intelligence of the enemy; and though Philip Dalton defended his commander with zeal and temper, he was forced to acknowledge that there were many points on which he, in common with others, had offered advice that had been disregarded—points, the neglect of which could not be otherwise than injurious to the discipline of the army which had already suffered in a great degree.

The arguments against Mathews finally prevailed, and the orders for his supercession in the command were given to Macleod, who, with Shaw and Humberstone, already mentioned, took a speedy departure from Bombay. A severe indisposition prevented Philip's accompanying them, as he had intended; for Macleod, aware of his talent, zeal, and military skill, had offered him the same office on his own staff

which he had filled with Mathews, and he had accepted it; and as the Government had promised a reinforcement, which the commanders represented as absolutely necessary to enable them to hold the ground they had acquired, there was an opportunity for proceeding with troops. This, besides being more agreeable to Philip, would enable him to be of use to the officer who was nominated to the command, from his knowledge of the road and of the country.

But he was destined never to proceed: the three commanders, who had sailed from Bombay in a small armed vessel belonging to the Government, were attacked off the Mahratta fort of Gheriah by some heavy Mahratta vessels, for which they were no match. The officers defended themselves and their charge bravely, and made a determined though ineffectual resistance, in which one of their number, the gallant Humberstone, lost his life; the others, with the crew and vessel, were carried into Gheriah, and it was not until after a long lapse of time that their release was effected. When the news of this disaster reached Bombay, it retarded the

preparations for embarkation which were being made for the troops; and ere many weeks had passed, the sad intelligence of the disaster at Bednore completed the distress and consternation of the Presidency.

From the few that escaped, who magnified the terrors of the event, and described in fearful terms the miseries endured by the prisoners,—and from the reports of the cruelties exercised upon them, which had long been prevalent, and were known to be well founded—Philip had despaired of ever gaining intelligence of his friend Herbert; and while he wrote to his family, whose direction he was in possession of, to inform them of the sad event, and to tell them that Herbert was known to have been in good health when he was taken with the rest, he could give them but little hope as to the final issue; indeed upon this point he was quite silent, as, having no hope himself, he was unable to impart any to them.

He did not, however, write for several months after the intelligence had been received at Bombay; for the letters he had dispatched for Herbert immediately on his arrival would, he hoped,

prevent his family from being over anxious; and he thought that perhaps news might arrive of the prisoners, of their health and condition, which would be acceptable, or that some treaty might be arranged between the English and Mysore governments which would put an end to their captivity; indeed it was in the latter confident hope that he wrote, when all prospect of an immediate release was out of the question.

The letters which Herbert had dispatched had reached England, and by them his family were informed of the issue of the war as far as the capture of Bednore; and he then wrote in the highest spirits, like a young and gallant soldier, of the prospects of the campaign, made light of his wound, and was eagerly looking for fresh encounters with the enemy, in which distinction and promotion were to be won. This account greatly soothed his parents and Amy, who was especially tormented by agonizing fears and apprehensions regarding him, in spite of his often repeated but playful assurances that he was safe and well.

"He cannot be safe," she used to argue to

herself, "when there are such desperate engagements as that of which he writes us word, and where he has too the baneful climate to contend against; but God is over all, and to Him I commit the future in hope and confidence."

And so she continued—a vague dread of future misery striving for mastery in her heart with deep religious reliance; and during this struggle her parents became, from her altered appearance, so anxious for her, that they would fain have removed her to one of the watering-places for change of air and scene.

She firmly opposed the proposal, for she clung with increasing attachment to her home, and apparently to the pursuits which Herbert had shared with her. But if they looked at her sketches, there used to be little advance made from day to day; she would sit for hours seemingly engaged on them, whilst her eye was fixed upon vacancy, or gazing upon the familiar spots she was delineating, where she had often watched his figure, or realizing to her tenacious memory all the words she had heard him speak there.

And thus the time passed; her companion-

ship with the family of Herbert increased, and she would spend days in conversing with them, especially with Mrs. Compton, about him, listening to every tale of his life,—to every incident even of his childhood with delight, and an interest which appeared to increase in their repetition. But the suspense after the receipt of his last letter—the one dispatched by Philip Dalton—grew day by day more insupportable; several vessels arrived, but there was no intelligence from Herbert. Many of the newspapers of the day mentioned the expedition, with some criticisms upon its object, and prophesied an ill termination to its exertions; and at length, when the ship arrived by which she had expected a long despatch, and there was none, and the letter was read from Mr. Herbert's agent, as we have before recorded, wherein he stated broadly that there was bad news from India—the poor girl's brain reeled under the shock of having her worst fears confirmed. Her active and already excited mind in an instant presented to her the being in whose existence her own was wrapped up, as if in death, ghastly, with disfiguring wounds; and the

thought, suddenly as it had come into her mind, for the time paralized her faculties; her body was not strong enough to resist its influence, and, yielding at once, she had fainted under the overpowering weight of her misery. News, however, there was of Herbert, which in some measure relieved their worst fears and gave room for hope; although sickening in its uncertainty, it gave room for hope, to which every member of both families clung with the tenacity naturally inspired by their affection.

The newspapers gave such accounts as could be gained of the disaster, and the name of Herbert was mentioned among those who were known to be in captivity. But they nowhere saw that of Dalton, whom Herbert had so constantly mentioned in his letters, and they concluded that he had been killed in one of the engagements: this was an additional source of pain to them, that Herbert had lost his dearest friend.

However, in a few months after, the first letter from Philip arrived at the Rectory, and despite its melancholy tone, it gave the family

good reason to hope. Philip was one who could not believe implicitly in the constant ill-treatment said to be exercised by the Sultaun upon his prisoners, and he could plainly see that such statements were encouraged by the Government, in order to induce those favourable to their cause to lend their aid in the struggle. And perceiving this, he wrote, that he hoped the treaties about to be drawn up between the two nations would be productive not only of Herbert's release, but of that of his fellow-captives;—he undeceived them, too (which was necessary), as to the natives of the country being savage, assuring them, on the contrary, that they were polite and courteous; and as the hopes of peace continued to be confirmed from time to time by Philip, who wrote by every opportunity, as well as by the papers, they remained in a most pitiable state of excitement, which was doomed to be bitterly disappointed.

The peace of 1784 came. Many a man whose existence had been despaired of by his long-expecting and wretched family, re-

appeared, and that of the Rectory now looked forward with intense eagerness to the receipt of letters from Herbert or from Philip Dalton, announcing their reunion, and the prospect of their speedy return home.

Alas! while others rejoiced, they were plunged into deeper despair than ever; for as Herbert's name did not appear in the lists of those who had been given up, Philip did not immediately write his bitter disappointment that his dear friend was not among their number.

Who could paint the withering effect of this miserable intelligence upon the unhappy Amy? She had striven, and successfully, against her own despairing heart; whilst a ray of hope broke in upon her gloomy future, she cherished it, and strove to dispel the clouds which doubt would, in spite of her exertions, accumulate before her. She was cheerful, and when Mrs. Compton mourned her son's early fate in bitter grief, and almost refused comfort, Amy would soothe her, and raise her to hope again. But from the last news there was no comfort to be gained. Had Herbert

been alive, he would have been given up like the rest; and though it was suspected at the time that many prisoners were retained by Tippoo in defiance of the articles of treaty, still that was so uncertain, so vague and wretched a hope, that it was abandoned as even sinful to indulge in, and Herbert was mourned as dead.

It was happy perhaps for Amy that her own grief was in a measure diverted by the long illness of Mrs. Compton, whom the violence of the affliction brought to the very verge of the grave. For many months did the gentle and patient girl minister to her who was to have been her mother, with a devotion of affection which hardly found its equal in that of her own daughter. From no one's hand did the sufferer take the remedies prescribed so readily as from Amy's; none could smooth the pillow of the languid invalid like Amy—none read to her so sweetly, none conversed with her upon their favourite subject—him who was lost to them both—so eloquently and so devotedly as Amy. And her beauty, which had grown up with her years, until it was now sur-

passingly bright—her meek and cheerful resignation, after the first pang of sorrow was over—her unceasing and untiring benevolence—made her an object of peculiar interest to the neighbourhood of all ranks, to whom her sad story and early trials were known.

Calm and cheerful as she usually was in the society of her family and at the Rectory, no one but her mother knew the bitter bursts of grief to which nature would force her sometimes, when the memory of him they thought dead was more prominently excited. Herbert was constantly the subject of their conversation; for this Amy loved, and it often soothed her to hear him spoken of or alluded to. But it was not this that affected her; it was often the merest trifle and sudden thought, the sight of a flower, a word or tone from Charles, who now strongly resembled his brother, that caused these paroxysms, which, violent as they were, prostrated her for the time, only to rise with renewed cheerfulness, resignation, and affection for those she loved.

They continued to hear from Philip Dalton, who, restless under the belief that Herbert still

lived, spared neither money nor pains to get information. As time flew on, it became known that some Europeans were in confinement, and Philip had dispatched one or two trusty emissaries to endeavour to discover Herbert. All had however ended in disappointment, and he was baffled in every inquiry. He did not assert to Herbert's family that he lived, but from time to time he renewed the supposition. After the lapse of nearly four years, they heard from him that he was about to return home on leave, and that he would take the earliest opportunity of visiting the Rectory. His coming was earnestly and impatiently expected for many months; for how much should they not have to hear of their long-lost Herbert from his most devoted friend! how many particulars of their short service together and its fatal result, which, though the themes of many letters, were incomplete in comparison with what they should hear from him in person!

At length his arrival in England was announced by him, and though he could not say when he should be at liberty, he declared it would not be long ere he performed his pro-

mise. Philip had thought it better thus to leave them in uncertainty, lest, having their attention fixed upon any particular day, the contemplation of the excitement which would necessarily follow would be more than the female part of the families could endure.

But he did not, he could not delay long; he was impatient to communicate his suspicions, his hopes that Herbert existed, which every day's experience and reflection told him were reasonable; and hardly a fortnight had elapsed, ere he took the mail to the town of ———, where the regiment had been quartered, and where he had now a friend. Leaving his portmanteau at the barracks, he took with him a change of linen, and late in the afternoon rode his friend's horse over to the Rectory.

It was a lovely autumn evening; the twilight had begun to deepen the shadows of the luxuriant woods of the park, and the Rectory groves appeared park and solemn at that hour. A few leaves had already fallen upon the smooth and beautifully kept entrance avenue, which passed under some huge elms, on whose

tops the noisy rooks still sat cawing, or rising suddenly with eccentric and rapid flights large bodies of the colony sailed through the air, alighting only to dispossess others of a more favoured place or one more coveted. Beyond a turning in the avenue, the house opened upon his view—an old edifice of red brick, of the age of Elizabeth ; the large oblong windows of the drawing-room, with their diamond panes, were a blaze of light ; and even as he rode along he could distinguish the forms of many within, and the cheerful notes of music came to him through the open casement.

A pale elderly lady lay on the sofa working—he felt sure it was Herbert's mother. There were several standing round a piano-forte : he listened for a while with deep pleasure, as the sounds of music now rose, now fell upon the evening air, and affected him the more powerfully as the air was one he well remembered Herbert to have often sung, and now the place he had occupied there was vacant, perhaps for ever.

As he listened, the voice of a female arose in a solo part, so liquid, so melodious, so ex-

quisitely modulated, that he drew closer to hear it better. Could it be that of Amy he thought? or one of Herbert's sisters, of whom he had heard him speak so often that he fancied he almost knew them?—Ellen perhaps, his favourite; but it was useless to speculate—he should soon know all. The solo ceased; again arose a full swell of voices, attuned by constant practice, and assisted by the instrument and a bass violin, which was played by an elderly gentleman. It lasted for a while, then ceased entirely—the party broke up cheerfully, and the sound of their merry voices caught his ear—a change, perhaps an abrupt one, from the melody he had heard, which he would have wished had been followed by silence, for his feelings were mournful, and the image of his lost friend was painfully vivid to his imagination; they might have arrived together, he thought.

Again he cast his eyes around him; the house, with its deeply embayed windows and quaint projections, was covered with roses and creepers, which entwined thickly around the drawing-room; beside there were a pear-tree and a large fig-tree which were trained over the wall,

and almost hid it with their luxuriant foliage, showing here and there the large black cross-beams which appeared through the masonry of the wall, and added to its venerable appearance. Before the house there was a flower-garden, which bloomed with a profusion of flowers, whose rich perfume arose on the evening air. On one side a long conservatory, and beyond it a thick and closely kept hedge that partly screened a wall which led to other gardens. On the other side was a lawn, close and mossy-looking, which stretched a short distance to a sunken fence, beyond which was a field with a few single trees, and the deep woods of the park made up the distance. The hall-door was low and deeply screened by a porch, around which roses and clematis flourished in luxuriance.

Dismounting from his horse he rung the bell, which was quickly answered; and desiring the servant to inform Mr. Compton that a gentleman wished to speak to him, he remained in the porch.

"Who can it be?" said some, as the servant announced the message. In another instant it had flashed into the minds of all that it might

be Captain Dalton; and with him came the memory of poor Herbert, now to be so freely awakened.

"If it should be he, Maria," said Mr. Compton to his lady, who at the announcement had risen from the sofa, "can you bear to see him?"

"Yes, love—yes, here—but with you only. Go into the dining-room, my children, we will call you after a while."

They obeyed instantly, and Mr. Compton hurried into the hall to receive the stranger, while his lady prayed fervently for support in the coming interview; for she trembled exceedingly, and her conflicting emotions almost overpowered her.

The servant was holding Philip's horse, and he himself was pacing slowly up and down the narrow porch. As Mr. Compton advanced, Philip turned to meet him; and his first glance assured him that the friend of his lost son was before him.

"You need not mention your name, my dear sir," said the old gentleman, as he clasped his hand most warmly and affectionately in his own, while his trembling voice showed how

deeply he was agitated ; " I am convinced that I now welcome our long-expected and already very dear Captain Dalton. We have been long expecting you, and I need hardly say how anxiously we have looked for the arrival of one who was so dear to—" and he hesitated for an instant ; but mastering his emotion, he continued—" to our poor Herbert, from whom we heard so much of you. God bless you, sir! that you have come to us so soon, when you must have had so many claims upon you from your own family."

" I thank you, sir, heartily, for this warm welcome," said Philip. " But before I proceed further, tell me candidly whether Mrs. Compton is able to see me. That I have seen you, will be a comfort to me, and for the present I will leave you, and give her time for any preparation she may wish to make."

" By no means : she is already aware that this visit could be from no other but yourself, and she will be better when she has seen you. You must make some allowances for a mother's grief—a fond mother's too—Captain Dalton."

"I know all, sir," said Philip, pressing his hand; "and Miss Hayward?"

"She is fortunately not with us tonight," replied Mr. Compton, "and we will speak upon the subject with her parents before we tell her that you are come."

They were at the drawing-room door, and Philip's heart beat faster than he had ever remembered it to beat before. The suspense and anxiety he was in, as to the issue of his meeting with Mrs. Compton, almost overcame his habitual self-possession; and he would have given worlds could he have ensured her equanimity, which was little to be expected. She, too, was not less excited; and a feeling of faintness came over her, as she heard the hand of her husband upon the lock. She made a strong effort however to repel it, and the next moment he and Dalton were before her.

"This is Captain Dalton, Maria," were all the words Mr. Compton had time to utter ere his lady advanced to meet him. It needed not his words to assure her that the tall, manly, and soldier-like figure of the young man was Philip; and as she eagerly took his prof-

fered hand, while her eyes were full of tears, she in vain strove to speak. She read in the expression of his fine features, as she looked into his face, that her own grief was reciprocated, and she could no longer restrain the utterance of her feelings, nor the impulse of her affectionate heart. She threw herself into his arms, as she would have done into her own son's, and wept; the tears and bitter sobs of a mother's grief could not be restrained, and she yielded to them freely.

For a while his reserved demeanour, under which was concealed as kind a heart as ever beat, struggled with his awakened sensibilities; but nature asserted her power; Philip's tears mingled with hers, and she could feel them falling fast upon her cheek, though silently, as he bent over and supported her. Mr. Compton did not interrupt them; he was too glad to see her emotion find so natural and easy a vent, for he had anticipated a much more violent effect. Mrs. Compton soon rallied.

"You will forgive this welcome of one who is so dear to us, Captain Dalton," she said, speaking with difficulty; "but you know that

with you are associated many, many painful recollections. Bear with me,—I shall be calm soon. I feel that my heart has already been relieved and is lighter."

Philip could not then say much in reply; but soon their conversation flowed more naturally and calmly; and ere long the rest of the family were admitted, and he was introduced and received as a brother among them.

Gradually their conversation turned upon him they thought dead. Philip had to answer a thousand questions, and to give the minutest particulars to the eager and loving inquirers; and though the tears of all flowed silently and fast, even as they spoke, yet Mrs. Compton felt, when she retired to rest at a late hour, as if some portion of the load which had oppressed her had been removed, and she fervently blessed God who had sent her such a friend and comforter.

CHAPTER XI.

The first constraint of ceremony having been broken, and the subject so near to the hearts of all touched upon even on the first night of their acquaintance, as every succeeding day passed they became more attached to each other—the parents, to one they looked upon and loved as a son—the children, to their poor brother's friend and dearest companion. Day by day the subject of poor Herbert's fate was the theme of conversation; they were never weary of it, and Philip unfolded to them gently but unreservedly his convictions that Herbert still lived—confined perhaps in some lonely hill-fort, away from the capital of Mysore, or engaged in the hated service of the ruler of the country.

For many others were known to have submitted to Tippoo's will in this respect, in the hope that some opportunity would be afforded for escape, or some action with their countrymen would facilitate their desertion.

Poor Amy! the bitterest trial she had endured since the news of Herbert's captivity, and next of his supposed death, was the meeting with Philip, and receiving from his own hands the little packet which Herbert had entrusted to him in case of his death, and which he had retained. For many days she could not see him; but at length she fixed a day and hour, and he walked over to Beechwood. He had not seen her except at church, where he had caught a glimpse of her graceful figure, dressed in simple mourning: this only excited his curiosity to know more of one whom his poor friend had loved with such intensity of affection—a love so faithfully reciprocated.

Mrs. Hayward received the young soldier, and in a short conversation with him justly estimated the strength and delicacy of his feelings; it was impossible for any one to have been more deeply aware of the difficult part he

had to perform, nor to have evinced more tenderness in the manner in which he executed it.

"I would not have pressed Miss Hayward upon the subject," he said; "I would not willingly distress her, nor excite thoughts which must violently affect her; but I made a promise solemnly to Herbert, and I have come to fulfil it; and it will be a gratification to me if I am allowed to do so. Still, if she declines an interview with me, I would leave the packet with you, Mrs. Hayward—convinced that it will be in safe hands, and it can be delivered or not to Miss Hayward as you please."

"If you will remain here, Captain Dalton, I will see Amy, and state what you say to her," replied the old lady, "but I can promise nothing: she is usually calm and strong-minded, but your coming may have such an effect upon her as to unfit her for receiving you. You shall however soon know the truth." And so saying she left the room.

Philip looked around. There were books, Italian and Spanish poets, open upon the table, with some beautiful embroidery, which showed

that Amy must have been there when he was announced. On a side table was an unfinished landscape—a large tree, a few sheep, and a mossy bank, beautifully painted; and the colours and water which stood near it proved that she had lately been engaged upon it. Philip went to examine it, and while admiring the freedom and vigour of the drawing, and the keen perception of nature evident in the colouring, the door gently opened, and a lady entered, whose appearance caused in his heart a thrill of excitement, and a confusion in his address which he had little expected.

"Miss Hayward, I presume," he said, advancing to her with hesitation; for her beauty, the sweet expression of her face, and her mild blue eyes, fixed his attention, and rendered his manner involuntarily constrained.

Amy could not reply, her heart was full even to choking; she had in vain tried to compose herself when his name was announced; but unable to do so, she had left the room; and it was only on hearing the message her mother had delivered, that she determined to see the friend of her Herbert, to speak to him who

had received his last message for her; and she came down alone to meet him. She had, however, taxed her powers of endurance to the utmost: the sight of the tall and manly figure of Philip, his dark and expressive features—bronzed somewhat by an eastern sun, yet preserving the ruddy glow of health—his soldier-like form and bearing—all caused at first a rush of remembrances almost too powerful to endure; and her imagination, despite of her efforts not to yield to such thoughts, could not help picturing to herself how Herbert would have been improved—how he would have looked, how he would have met her after their long absence! She could not speak to Dalton, but trembled exceedingly, and would have fallen; but seeing her agitation, he assisted her to a seat; she sank into it, and, unable to speak, buried her face in her hands. Philip sat silent for awhile, but he saw that further delay would only be a protraction of her misery.

"Miss Hayward," he said very respectfully, "I am the bearer of a small packet for you, which I promised to deliver; if you will receive it from my hands, I shall be gratified, as you

will have enabled me to fulfil a promise I have looked on as sacred."

Again Amy endeavoured to reply, but her words failed her, and her hand trembled so much as she stretched it out to him, that he feared the consequences of her emotion.

"I implore you to be calm, Miss Hayward; shall I ring for water—for your mother? can I do ought to assist you?" he continued, as he gave her the little packet, which she received with extreme agitation, and not daring to look at him.

"No, I thank you, Captain Dalton," she said at length, after a severe effort to repress her feelings, in which she partly succeeded. "I am better now, and will hear whatever he——whatever you have to say—it will be better than to delay."

But Philip feared the result, and urged that her mother at least should be present.

"No," she replied, "it is better thus; with her I should fail,—alone, I think I can be firm; therefore proceed."

And he obeyed her: he told her of their last service—of the events of the war; and when she

appeared to listen calmly, he mentioned their last few days' intercourse, their last interview, their farewell, and their mutual promises in case of the death of either. There was no message in particular to herself—the packet would explain all, he said; he had been desired to mention to her the events that had occurred before he received it, and he was thankful he had been spared to deliver the message himself.

Amy listened patiently, and grew calmer as he proceeded; he could not see her features, for her hand covered them as she leaned back; but at length, before he ceased, he could perceive that his simple narrative had soothed her; for a silent tear forced its way between her slender fingers, and trickled over her fair hand; she appeared not to be aware of it, and others followed rapidly; nature had yielded her most gentle remedy for a troubled spirit—silent tears, which flow without pain or sobbings.

He did not disturb her thoughts, which appeared entirely to absorb her, and he fancied that she prayed mentally, for her lips moved. He arose, and stealing to the door, opened it

very gently and quitted the apartment; it was enough that he had seen and spoken to her. Mrs. Compton stood without, anxiously awaiting the issue, should there have been occasion for her aid; he told her how touchingly, how beautifully she had heard him; and the mother was glad that Dalton had seen her, that the crisis had passed so calmly.

"She will be better for this hereafter," she said, and judged rightly: Amy was more cheerful, and more equably so from that day.

Mrs. Hayward accompanied Philip to her husband's study, to bear him the happy tidings that had so rejoiced her; and here they long and earnestly talked over Philip's hopes, his almost certainty that Herbert lived. There was much which appeared to both Mr. and Mrs. Hayward improbable in what he thought—much that they could not understand, from their ignorance of the habits of the natives, and of their highly civilized and cultivated character. In the end, however, they could not but encourage the glimmering of hope which had entered their minds—dimmed, it is true,

by doubts and fears, but still abiding there. It would have been cruel, however, to have mentioned this to Amy, and for the present she was ignorant of it.

Amy sat long so absorbed in thought that she had not noticed the departure of Philip Dalton; and when she spoke, not daring to withdraw her hands from her eyes, and received no answer, she looked around and saw that she was alone. Then she thanked Philip in her heart for his tender consideration of her, and long remembered the act, simple as it was, with gratitude. She held the packet she had received, and once more dared to look on the well-known hand-writing. She knew that it could be of no later date than the letters she had already in her possession; but it was not opened,—it was to be given her only in case of his death; and her mind was oppressed with feelings of awe, as she almost hesitated to break the seal and peruse its contents. It is a period for solemn thought when we open a letter from one known to be dead—to think that the hand which traced the characters is cold and

powerless, that the mind whose thoughts are there recorded is no longer constituted as ours. This carries us involuntarily into a deep train of thought and speculation, vague and indefinite—leading to no end but a vain striving for knowledge of what is better hidden in futurity. Or if the writing be that of one dear or familiar to us, how many reminiscences crowd instantly into the mind!—tokens of affection, in which nature is prolific, soothing the thoughts of the survivor, while they hallow the memory of the dead.

Amy's packet was precious indeed: Herbert had written to her gravely and thoughtfully, yet here and there with passionate love, as though he had at times failed in checking the expression of feelings, to which, when she received the letter, he could no longer respond. He had enclosed a little locket, which contained his hair, and implored her with an earnestness which his strong sense of honour prompted, but which cost him pain to write and her to peruse, while she honoured his memory in death, not to refuse that station in life to which she would be solicited by many.

She appreciated these expressions with a just sense of the feelings under which he had written them; but while she read them, she more strongly than ever clung to his memory with grateful and devoted, yet mournful affection. And could Philip have seen her as she rose from the perusal of that letter, with eyes dim and glistening with tears, and advancing to the window, look forth in her calm and gentle beauty over the broad and glowing landscape, —he might have worshiped her in his heart as a personification of one of those pure beings who do service in heaven, and who, touched with our infirmities, can be supposed to feel in some degree the sorrows of an earthly existence.

From that day forth there was no reserve on Philip's part towards the Beechwood family, with whom he was ever a welcome and a sought-for guest. His own affairs, and a visit to his elder brother (for his mother, his only surviving parent, had died while he was in India), occupied him for a month after his departure from the Rectory; and when this period had arrived, he was only too glad to avail

himself of the pressing invitations of both families to return and spend some time alternately with them. The young Haywards too had returned home; the one from Scotland, where he had been on a visit; the other from Oxford, where he was studying for a degree.

CHAPTER XII.

In this delightful society Philip's time flew rapidly and happily; he was fond of the chase and of shooting, and in the noble stud of Beechwood and over its broad manors and preserves, there were ample resources for both pursuits, and the young men became intimate and inseparable companions. Among themselves they often talked of Herbert as of a departed brother, and Philip at length unreservedly opened his heart to them on the subject which, except one of later growth, was nearest to it.

Our hearts often take strong impressions from the veriest trifles;—how much more when they are assisted or coloured by adventitious

circumstances! As Philip listened to the sweet voice he had heard singing, as he rode up to the Rectory on the evening he first arrived there, his sensibilities had been powerfully excited towards the songstress, either because she might be the affianced, or the sister of his friend.

He had been introduced to all the family in succession on that evening, and he was at once struck with the beauty of one of the young ladies, and her great likeness to his friend; she had the same large and expressive blue eye, regular features, and brown hair, falling upon her shoulders in luxuriant curling tresses; she was taller in proportion than he was, but her figure was remarkable for its grace and beauty of contour. He then hoped she might be the songstress; why, he could hardly have told.

He heard her repeat the air to which he had first listened, for it was often afterwards sung by the small but well-trained band, and distinguished by the name of Captain Dalton's favourite; night after night did Philip sit listening with increasing delight to Ellen's rich voice as she sung either alone or in parts. Indeed

she was a thorough mistress of the art, in which she had from the first been well-grounded; and her execution evinced a pure taste, which, entering into the spirit of the composer, sought rather to draw gratification from giving expression to his thoughts, than to indulge in the poor vanity of exhibiting her own powers. She was by no means insensible to the marked pleasure which her singing gave to the young soldier; and from this commencement, there gradually sprung up a warm and increasing attachment, which her parents observed with sincere pleasure.

Philip found, on a further knowledge of her character, that she possessed many tastes and feelings in common with his own; and he observed with delight her extensive charity, her visits with Amy to the sick and poor of the neighbourhood, and their close and affectionate friendship. Somehow or other, he oftener spoke to her than to the rest, and she listened (so he thought) with more interest than the others to his tales of foreign climes and hard service; he oftener found something to do for her, oftener walked with her, or escorted her

and Amy upon their charitable visits. A thousand kindnesses passed between them, which in others would have been forgotten, but with them were treasured up, and remembered vividly when they were separated.

We do not intend to be the chroniclers of this tale of mutual attachment, which steadily increased, and—as there was no opposition from her parents, but on the contrary the utmost desire that it should progress steadily and uninterruptedly—was in the end successful. Philip waited, however, until he had known her for nearly a year; and when he felt sure that his offer would be accepted, he made it, and was rewarded. The gentle and lovely girl had long been his, and she now gave herself up to the ardent feelings of her loving heart.

They were married: early in the spring of the year succeeding the one in which Philip had arrived, the joyous bridal took place—on one of those bright and sunny days when hardly a cloud dims the serenity of the sky, when the buds are just bursting into leaf, and nature, having rested through the winter, is about to resume her robe of luxuriant foliage,

ere she rejoices in the genial sun and the warm winds of summer.

Amy consented, with much fear and many doubts of her ability, to go through her simple duties as one of the bride's-maids; and she appeared that day in more than her usual beauty, having thrown off her garb of mourning. Ellen's sisters, and Philip's only one, were the others ; and as the joyous procession wound down the broad aisle of the old church, and the light streaming through the painted windows rested upon the group collected around the altar, assuredly on a gayer bridal party, or one whose hearts were more linked together by affection, the bright and glowing sun never shone. Nevertheless, there were a few among them on whom the hand of sorrow had lain heavily, and who, if they did not join in the exuberant joy of the rest, were as sincere and as fervent in their prayers and wishes for the happiness of those who plighted their vows in their presence.

Some months—nearly a year—passed, and, what Philip had wished so much, the purchase of a majority in a regiment then in India

was at last within his attainment; for he had not concealed from Mr. Compton nor from his wife, that he still looked to that land for distinction and advancement in his profession, and also for the chance of sooner or later discovering a clue to the fate of him whom all still mourned. The handsome portion which he had received with Ellen had enabled him to meet the outlay for this advancement with perfect convenience, and in a short time he was gazetted as Major in the 4th, then serving in the Madras Presidency; and being anxious to join his regiment, he prepared without delay.

This was, however, productive of another incident in the family circle of Beechwood. In the mind of the youngest of Amy's brothers, Philip's wild tales of adventure—of battles, of marches, of the gorgeous country, and its curious and interesting inhabitants—of their ceremonies and their various faiths—of tiger and wild-boar hunts—had excited a restless curiosity to behold them, and to become an actor in the stirring scenes which were every day taking place. But when Philip spoke of Herbert, and of his own hope that he would be eventually

recovered, Charles Hayward's enthusiasm was warmed by his affection, and his waking thoughts and dreams were alike incessantly occupied with speculations upon the subject, which unfitted him for study, and rendered him restless and uneasy. Long before Philip had declared his intention of returning to India, Charles had determined upon requesting his father's permission to enter the army in a regiment serving as near the scene of Herbert's disappearance as possible.

Charles too loved his sister with an intensity which would have urged him to make any sacrifice for her sake, and it was anguish to him to see her bowed down by mental suffering, and clinging with fond tenacity to the memory of the dead, when his own exertions, guided by the experience of their friend Dalton, might, under the aid of Providence, be instrumental in restoring her to her usual health and joyous spirits. It was true she had expressed no thought or hope of Herbert's existence to any of them; and the youth, as he roamed with her through the park, or sat with her in her own little study, where she was surrounded by

precious memorials of Herbert, often longed to tell her of Philip's suspicions, and his own wild yearnings towards that distant land.

Had he done so, there is little doubt that she would have disclosed to him, sooner than she did, the hope she secretly cherished that Herbert still existed and would return. No sooner had Philip openly declared his intention of revisiting India, than Charles's determination was formed to break the matter at once to his father, and to proceed with Philip, should no opposition be made—some objections he certainly anticipated, but he thought he could overcome them. Before he broached the subject to his parents, he held a long and anxious conversation with Philip, and was delighted to find that he not only coincided in his views, but was prepared to aid them by his interest in the purchase of an ensigncy in the regiment to which he now belonged, in which there was a vacant commission.

His proposal, as he had anticipated, was met by many objections and much distress on the part of his parents and his sister. Loving him tenderly as she did, Amy could not bear the

thought which at first obtruded upon her, that India would be his grave, as it had been that of Herbert. But the young man was resolute; and, after exhausting all his arguments, he called Philip Dalton to his aid, who not only promised to be a guardian to him, but declared he would let slip no opportunity of bettering his station and prospects in his profession. All opposition, therefore, ceased gradually, partly because Charles appeared to relish the prospects of a military life more than any other, and partly because there appeared a likelihood of rapid advancement in the regiment while it remained on its eastern service.

The day at last arrived when he was to leave home for his long absence; to all it was a source of bitter grief, but the most so to his mother and to Amy; and ere the hour came when he was to depart from them, Amy led him away from the house, and, wandering together, they talked over the future—to him bright with promise—a contrast, and a sad one to hers, which was so overcast. They wandered on through the parks, and by the stream, where years before she had roamed

with Herbert. Charles knew that she must be thinking of him whose fate was wrapt in mystery, and he longed to know and to share all her thoughts and feelings on the subject. Gradually he led her to speak of Herbert; and as their conversation warmed, the devoted girl could no longer refrain from unburdening her heart, and confessing the hopes which only her God, to whom she addressed them night and morning in fervent prayer, knew to exist.

Still, however, Charles was sorely perplexed, and his judgement and affection were at variance; but the latter prevailed under her artless confidence, and he told her in hesitation and fear of Philip Dalton's hopes of the chances of Herbert's life, spoke to her of the folly of cherishing hope only because they had not heard he was dead, but nevertheless declared how this had preyed on his mind till it almost amounted to an earnest of success.

She listened with breathless interest to his narrative—it was too much in accordance with her own thoughts to be slighted. She did not blame her brother that he had kept it from her, and she could not have borne it from Dalton:

now she believed all—not rashly, however—for her mind was strong and tempered by affliction; but there was more room for hope than ever, and she felt as though the hand of Providence was discernible in the matter, guiding her brother onward in the track of her lost Herbert. Now that their most secret thoughts were in common, she felt that she could part with Charles more easily; and he left her at last in their little summer-house, where she loved to sit, and where they had been conversing—afflicted, yet with hope in her heart.

His mother bade him farewell, with many tears and many prayers for his safety; and, accompanied by his father and his elder brother, Charles was rapidly whirled away from his home, to enter upon the life of danger and adventure he had chosen for himself. In another week, he, with Philip Dalton and his wife, had left their native shores for a long and perhaps perilous absence.

Six months had now passed at Seringapatam, during much of which time Kasim Ali had been absent on the various duties connected with

his new situation. He had risen in rank, and from the steadiness of his conduct the Khan would have been glad to have kept Kasim always with him; but this was impossible, for the Sultaun's eye was upon him, although, remembering the scene in the Durbar, he had wished to see little of one who had behaved so boldly before him, yet whom he respected from the lucky appearances he believed Kasim to possess, and which he had given himself credit for having discovered. He would often say to his favourite, Syud Sahib, that he was sure Kasim Ali, notwithstanding he was in disgrace, would be of service to him in the end, and that it was better he should be checked at first, and thus inspired with a thirst for distinguishing himself, than spoiled by too early notice or promotion.

But he had nevertheless given a strong proof of his reliance on the young man's ability and courage. Hardly a month had passed after his disgrace, and Kasim was fast sinking into a state of apathy at his dim prospects, which at first were so brilliant, when the Sultaun entrusted him with a mission requiring much delicacy and tact in its execution. It will

be remembered that the Khan had stated in the Durbar, that he had heard of an embassy to Seringapatam being meditated at the Nizam's court; and this Tippoo so earnestly desired, that his restless mind was in a constant state of irritation upon the subject. Could he only detach the Nizam from the alliance of the hated English—could the Afghan monarch only see the two great Mahomedan powers of the south united in a close alliance—he would pour his hardy followers upon their northern possessions—there might be a second battle of Paniput! And, with such a result, what was to prevent the northern army joining with the Nizam's—with his own—and, falling in one overwhelming mass upon the English possessions, their driving the hated race into the sea for ever? A month passed, and still no embassy arrived, nor was there any intelligence of one; to gain news therefore of the Nizam's court, he dispatched Kasim, attended only by a horseman or two, to travel by rapid marches to Hyderabad, and to discover, as far as lay in his power, the sentiments of the Court and the feeling of the people.

Kasim was gratified beyond expression by

the selection of him above others of known sagacity for such a mission, and he determined to spare neither exertion nor zeal in his master's cause, in order to regain his favour. By the most rapid marches he traversed the nearest road to Bellary—that to the westward of Nundidroog; and resting only a night at his own humble but not less dear home, where he found his mother well and his affairs continuing prosperous, he pushed on to Hyderabad; where, as soon as he arrived, he set himself to work to gain information.

For nearly three months did he wait there, expecting with anxiety the determination of the vacillating prince. At one time he heard that an embassy would soon set off, and that a nobleman was appointed ambassador; this was again contradicted, and it was rumoured that the Nizam had entered into a fresh league with the English. But in the end there was no doubt that an embassy would be sent to try the temper of the Mysore chief; and Kasim, hearing from undoubted authority the name of the gentleman who had been nominated, Ali Reza, waited on him, disclosed the subject of his mission, and having

given such an account as he was able of the Sultaun's anxiety, received in return the purport of the proposed embassy, which was in effect what Tippoo looked for. Having obtained this, and being assured by Ali Reza that they should meet again in a short time, Kasim left Hyderabad, and, with the same expedition, returned to Seringapatam. Again, on his way, he staid with his mother; again he visited the spot, which continued dear to him from the memorable night's adventure,—the trees were growing up, and the tomb of the poor soldier was neatly kept. He had to answer a thousand questions to his mother respecting their journey and Ameena, of whom Kasim could now tell her nothing, except that the Khan, whenever he inquired after her health, said she was well and happy.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Sultaun was delighted at the news he received, which, while it surpassed his expectations, apparently confirmed him in his immediate plans of action. As the rainy season of 1788 closed, large bodies of troops were dispatched to Coimbatoor, for the purpose of prosecuting the war against the rebellious Nairs, who, in the jungles and forests of Malabar, continued to defy his governor's power, and the forces from time to time sent against them. Among the latter was Kasim, soon after his return from the mission to Hyderabad, from the success of which he had hoped to have reoccupied his place near the Sultaun's person: but the wrong he had done had not been entirely forgiven or forgotten.

Nor was the Khan his companion; he was detached with the other half of the Khan's risala, which was commanded by Dilawur Ali, an officer somewhat like the Khan himself, but older—one of Hyder Ali's earliest adherents, who had been spared through many a hard fight and rough service; to him Kasim was of the utmost use, both as an excellent secretary, and an intelligent and upright adviser.

The Sultaun took the field in person against the Nairs in January of the ensuing year, and prosecuted the war against them with the utmost energy. In one fort alone, two thousand of them capitulated, who were converted, under the threat of death if they refused the rite of Islam: complying therefore, they publicly ate of beef, which, abhorrent as it was to them, they were obliged to partake of. The war prospered, and, ere the rains had set in, the territory was subdued by the ravages of the Mysore army; for the war had been proclaimed a holy one by the Sultaun, who, with mad fanaticism, everywhere destroyed temples, broke their images and plundered their treasures. Those Nairs who would

not accept the conversion offered, were hunted like wild beasts and destroyed in thousands.

The army at Coimbatoor heard of these events one by one as they happened, and of the marriage of the Sultaun's son to the beautiful daughter of the lady ruler of Cannanore; and he soon afterwards arrived in triumph at Coimbatoor, having left a large detachment to complete the destruction of the Nairs.

Great were the rejoicings upon the victories that had been gained; the army had tasted blood, and, like their tiger leader, thirsted for more. Here was celebrated the Mohurrum, the sacred anniversary of the deaths of Hassan and Hoosein, with all the pomp and with all the zeal to which an army of fanatical Mahomedans could be excited by the example of their bigoted Sultaun. At this time was issued the proclamation that the kingly Noubut was to be performed five times on every Friday, because that day was the sabbath of the faithful—the day on which the flood happened—the day on which the Heaven was created. The Sultaun and his astrologers observed the aspect of the stars; and in a fortunate hour when the

Moon was in Taurus, Mercury and Venus in Virgo, the Sun in Leo, Saturn in Aquarius, and Venus in opposition to Libra, it was proclaimed with pomp in the mosques that the music would be played and royal state observed. Then the deep tones of the huge kettle-drums burst from the neighbourhood of the Sultaun's tent, and the assembled army broke into loud acclamations and hoarse cries of "Deen! Deen! The Sultaun is the apostle! the Sultaun is the conqueror!"

A few days afterwards the long looked-for embassy arrived from Hyderabad, and Kasim once more welcomed his friends. They were presented to the Sultaun in a full durbar of his officers, native and European, with all the pomp of regal state. They were at once disgusted with the assumed consequence of one whose state was less than that of their prince; but they presented the splendid Koran they had been entrusted with, upon which it was said that the Nizam had sworn to aid Tippoo with his whole army and power against the English. The letters they bore were cautious and dignified; yet, through the overwhelming flow of

Eastern compliment, could be discovered the hidden meaning which Tippoo had so long and so earnestly expected. The ambassadors were dismissed for the present with honour, and the whole army rejoiced that such an alliance would be entered into.

A long conference did Tippoo hold that night, with those officers he habitually consulted, upon the subject of the embassy. He had long been solicitous of allying himself by marriage with the princely family of the Dekhan, but had never had an opportunity of proposing it; now, when the Nizam had sought him—when, humbled by the English and in dread of the Mahratta power, that prince had asked aid against both from his brother in the faith—he thought he could make that a condition of compliance. It had been his favourite project for years, and he was now determined to urge it.

It was in vain that those who wished his cause well, advised him bluntly and honestly to forgo his request for the present; there were others who listened to his rhapsodies about the stars, to the records of his dreams,

until they were carried on to support the demand; and it was made as proudly by the vain and inflated Sultaun, as his receipt of the embassy had been ostentatious and offensive.

But the Nizam's ambassadors were men of sound judgement; they knew that their prince had lowered himself already in sending the embassy to a self-constituted Sultaun —a low-born upstart; and, men of high family themselves, they could well appreciate the situation in which he would feel himself placed by the proposal. They answered the demand in cold and haughty terms, and, requesting their dismissal, soon after left his camp.

It was in vain that the Sultaun's best friends urged their recall as of vital importance to himself,—and to the cause of Islam, the ambassadors were allowed to proceed on their return to Hyderabad. The Sultaun's message was received with indignation by the Nizam, whose pride instantly rose against the degradation of the proposed matrimonial connexion. An embassy from Tippoo, which followed, was dismissed with a flat refusal; and the Nizam,

throwing himself now entirely into the cause of the English, pressed them for the execution of the treaty of 1768, which involved the conquest of Mysore.

Those who were near the Sultaun when he received the reply, for he had waited the issue of his demand ere he commenced the operations he had long ago determined upon, saw how nearly the refusal had touched his pride, and expected some outbreak of violent passion. But he stifled his feelings for the time; or perhaps, in the pride of possessing the fine army he commanded, and the slavish adoration which it paid him, he did not heed the slight. He was only heard to say, "Well, it is a matter of no consequence; we, who are the chosen of Alla, will alone do the work which lies before us, marked out so plainly that we cannot deviate from it. Inshalla! alone we will do what Nizam Ali Khan will wonder at in his zenana, as he sits smoking like an eunuch. Ya, kureem Alla! thou art witness that thy servant's name has been left out from among those who are not to be attacked; Nizam Ali and the base infidel English have done this.

But let them beware; thou canst avenge me on them both if thou wilt!"

His army too felt the slight which had been offered, and in their mad zeal might have been led to the gates of Hyderabad or those of Madras, but that was not the Sultaun's plan; he had resolved on one which had been sketched out by his father, and which he thought he had now matured. The possession of Travancore had long been coveted by his father, but he had been repulsed in his attacks upon it; and as many of the conquered Nairs had taken refuge in the Travancore territory, the Sultaun now demanded that they should be given up as rebellious subjects. This being indignantly refused, as he expected, he at length marched from Coimbatoor at the head of thirty-five thousand men, the flower of his army.

The Khan had arrived with the remainder of the corps from Seringapatam, and had brought Ameena with him, to the disgust and chagrin of his other wives, who, during his stay, had vainly endeavoured to begin their scheme of tormenting the gentle girl. She

had hitherto been unmolested, and as happy as it was possible for her to be with these companions, and such others as she became acquainted with from time to time.

The friends were now once more united, and looked forward with ardour to sharing the events and dangers of the campaign together. Kasim, in the daily march, often watched the well-known palankeen of Ameena to its destination, and, as often as etiquette permitted, inquired after her. He heard she was well, and it would have been pleasant to him could he have known the truth—that he was often the subject of interesting conversation between her and her lord, and that she remembered him gratefully and vividly.

Through the plain which extends westward to the ocean, between the huge and precipitous Neelgherries on the one hand, and the lofty and many-peaked Animallee range on the other, the host of Tippoo poured. Day by day saw an advance of many miles; and the season being favourable, they marched on without a check. The Sultaun was always at the head of the column of march, sometimes on foot

with a musket on his shoulder, showing an example to his regular infantry who followed in order, relating his dreams, and pretending to inspiration among his sycophants who marched with him. At other times he appeared surrounded by his irregular cavalry, whom of old he had led against the English at Perambaukum,—a gorgeous-looking force, consisting of men of all descriptions—the small and wiry Mahratta, the more robust Mahomedan, men from Afghanistan and from the north of India, whom the splendid service and brilliant reputation of the Sultaun had tempted from their distant homes.

Sometimes he would be seen to dash out from among them as they rode along—a wild and picturesque looking band—and turning his horse in the plain, would soon be followed by the most active and best-mounted of his officers, whose bright costumes, armour, and gaudy trappings glistened in the sun as they rode at one another. Then would ensue some mock combat or skirmish, in which the Sultaun bore an active and often a victorious part, and in which hard blows were by no means of rare

occurrence. Ever foremost in these mock encounters were Kasim Ali and the Khan his commander; the former however was always the most conspicuous. He was usually dressed in a suit of chain-armour, which had been given him by the Khan, and which he wore over his usual silk or satin quilted vest; on his head was a round steel cap, surmounted by a steel spike, and around it was always tied a shawl of the gayest red or yellow, or else a mundeel or other scarf of gold or silver tissue. He usually carried a long tilting-lance of bamboo, with a stuffed ball at the end, from which depended a number of small streamers of various colours; or else his small inlaid matchlock, with which from time to time he shot at birds, or deer as they bounded along in the thickets which lined the road. He had expended all the money he could spare in purchasing handsome trappings for his horse; and indeed the Khan's noble gift well became his silver ornaments and the gay red, yellow and green khogeer*, the seat of which was of crimson velvet, with a deep fringe cut into points, and hanging far below its belly.

* Stuffed saddle.

Tippoo often noticed the young Kasim since his mission to Hyderabad, and as he attended the Khan (who was always among the crowd of officers near the person of the Sultaun) he frequently had an opportunity of joining in these *melées,* in which he was dreaded by many for his strength, perfect mastery of his weapons and beautiful horsemanship. Indeed the Sultaun had himself, on more than one occasion, crossed spears with the young Patél, and been indebted for victory to the courtesy of his antagonist rather than his own prowess. He never addressed to him more than a word or two during these mock encounters, noticing him however to the old Khan, by whom the gracious speeches were related to Kasim in his tent.

Kasim had been more than usually fortunate one morning, a few days after they had left Coimbatoor; he had engaged rather roughly with another officer, and had overthrown him, and the Sultaun expressed himself with more than usual warmth to the Khan.

"By the Prophet, we must forgive thy young friend," he said, "and promote him; didst thou see how he overthrew Surmust Khan

just now, Khan Sahib? there are few who could do that. We had much ado to persuade the Khan that it was accidental; thou must tell the youth to be more discreet in future; we would have no man his enemy but ourselves."

"May your condescension increase!" cried the Khan; "I will tell the youth; but did my lord ever see him shoot?"

"Ha! can he do that also, Khan? could he hit me yonder goat, thinkest thou?" exclaimed Tippoo, as he pointed to one, the patriarch of a herd, browsing among some craggy rocks at a short distance, and which, interrupted in its morning's meal, was bleating loudly, as it looked over the glittering and busy host which was approaching.

"It is a long shot," said the Khan, putting his fore-finger between his teeth and considering; "nevertheless, I think he could."

"Wilt thou hold me a wager he does?" cried the Sultaun; "I will bet thee a pair of English pistols against that old one of thine, he does not hit it."

"May your favour never be less upon your servant! I accept it," cried the Khan; and he

turned round to seek Kasim, who was behind among the other officers. The Sultaun stopped, and those around him cried out, "A wager! a wager! Inshalla, the Sultaun will win, his destiny is great!"

Kasim was brought from the rear after some little time, to where the Sultaun stood awaiting him; the Khan had not told him why, and he appeared to ask for orders. All was soon explained to him; but the distance was great, and he doubted his power; however, not daring to disobey, he addressed himself to his task. The goat continued steady, and after a long aim he fired. It was successful; the animal lost its footing, rolled from its high place, and ere any one of the grooms could reach it with a knife, or pronounce the blessing before they cut its throat, it was dead: the ball had broken its neck. "Mashalla! Wonderful!" passed from mouth to mouth, while some wondered at, and others envied the young Patél's success.

"It must have been chance," cried the Sultaun good humouredly; "even we, who are by the blessing of Alla a sure shot, could not have done that. Nevertheless thou hast won

the pistols, Khan, and shalt have them. But what say you, my friends, to a hunt; yonder are the Animallee hills, and it is strange if we find no game. We will prove thee again, young sir, ere we believe thy dexterity."

"A hunt, a hunt!" cried all; and the words were taken up and passed from rank to rank, from regiment to regiment, down the long column, until all knew of it, and were prepared to bear their part in the royal sport. Preparations were begun as soon as the army arrived at its halting-place; men were sent forward for information of game; all the inhabitants of the country round were collected by the irregular horse to assist in driving it towards one spot, where it might be attacked.

For a day previously, under the active superintendence of the royal huntsmen, the beaters, with parties of matchlock- and rocket- men, took up positions all round a long and narrow valley; its sides were thickly clothed with wood, but it had an open space at the bottom through which it was possible to ride, though with some difficulty, on account of the long and rank grass. The ground was soft and marshy in

places, and had been, at one time, cultivated with rice as appeared by the square levels constructed so as to contain water. Large clumps of bamboos arose to an enormous height here and there, their light foliage waving in the wind, and giving them the appearance of huge bunches of feathers among the other dense trees by which they were surrounded. Where the ground was not marshy, it was covered with short sward, in some places green, in others parched by the heat of the sun. The sides of the valley arose steeply for five or six hundred feet, sometimes presenting a richly coloured declivity, from which hung the graceful leaf of the wild plantain, creepers innumerable, smaller bamboos, and other light and graceful foliage, amongst which was mingled the huge leaf and sturdy stem of the teak.

Far above the head of the valley—terminated by an abrupt rock, over which a rivulet flung itself in a broken waterfall—hill after hill, mountain after mountain towered into the fleecy mists and clouds—not so lofty as the Neelgherries, which, in the distance on the right, appeared like a huge blue wall, except where

the sun glistened upon a precipice of many thousand feet in height, or where a vast chasm or jutting shoulder threw a broad shadow over the rest—but still very lofty, and wooded almost to the summit. A strong body of infantry had been placed across the mouth of the valley, with directions to throw up stockades in the elephant paths; and what game it was possible to drive in from the plain had thus been compelled to enter, and lay, it was thought, securely in the valley. One or two elephants had been seen, which gave hope of more.

Upon the back of that noble white-faced elephant Hyder (which was taken at the siege of Seringapatam, and still adorns, if he be not recently dead, the processions of the present Nizam,) in a howdah of richly chased and carved silver, lined with blue velvet, sat Tippoo—his various guns and rifles supported by a rail in front of him, and ready to his hand. Only one favourite attendant accompanied him, who was in the khowass, or seat behind, and had charge of his powder and bullets. The Sultaun's dress was quite plain, and, except for his peculiar turban, he could not have been distinguished.

His cortège was gorgeous beyond imagination. As soon as the usual beat of the kettle-drums had announced that he had mounted his elephant, all who had others allowed them hurried after him, dressed in their gayest clothes and brightest colours. Fifty or sixty elephants were there of that company, all rushing along close together in a body at a rapid pace; around them was a cloud of irregular cavalry, who, no longer fettered by any kind of discipline, rode tumultuously, shouting, brandishing spears and matchlocks, and occasionally firing their pistols in the air. The hoarse kettle-drums sent forth their dull booming sound, mingled with the trampling of the horses, and at times the shrill trumpeting of the elephants. The army had cast aside its uniform for the day; officers and men were dressed in their gayest and most picturesque apparel—turbans and waistbands, and vests of every hue, and armed with weapons of all kinds, swords and shields, matchlocks and heavy broad-bladed spears; such as had not these, brought their own muskets and ammunition.

Thousands had gone on before, and were seen crowding the sides of the entrance to the valley, but kept back by the exertions of the huntsmen, in order that the Sultaun should enter first, and take up his position in the most open place, while the game should be gradually aroused and driven towards him. From the shape of the valley, and its almost perpendicular sides, it was impossible to surround it so as to make a simultaneous advance from all sides.

One of the Sultaun's own elephants had been sent for the Khan and Kasim, who were desired to keep as near him as the crowd would allow. They reached the entrance of the glen at last, and by the streamlet they met the chief huntsman, who was ready to lead them to the spot they should occupy, but the Sultaun would not permit this.

"Let us advance together," he cried; "I see the end of the glen is occupied by men, so nothing can escape us. Bismilla! let the signal be given to proceed."

It had been previously agreed upon; and the

discharge of a small field-piece, which had been dragged to the spot, awoke a thousand echoes in the quiet glen, and the merry thousands with one hoarse shout rushed forward.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was a heart-stirring and magnificent sight to see the advance of that mighty hunting-party into the glen. Scarcely a quarter of a mile across, the numerous elephants and horsemen were so closed together that it was impossible for anything to escape the line which now slowly but steadily advanced. The distance from the mouth to the waterfall was not more than three quarters of a mile, and nearly straight, so that the greater part of the intervening distance could be seen distinctly—in some places presenting a thick and impenetrable jungle, in others open, as we have before stated. Along the most abrupt sides, and in advance of the royal party, men were stationed, who, as the line advanced, discharged rockets, which whizzing

into the air descended at a short distance among the trees and brushwood, and urged on the game to the end, where it was met by other discharges. Hundreds of men bore large flat drums, which they beat incessantly with sticks; and from time to time the broken and monotonous sound of the kettle-drums which accompanied Tippoo, and showed where he was, mingled with the din of shouts, screams, halloos, the shrill blasts of the collery horn, the shriller trumpetings of the elephants, and the neighings of the wild and frightened horses. All these noises collectively reverberated through the narrow glen, and from the echoes there arose one vast chaos of stunning sound, the effect of which was assisted by the clear air, while it produced the wildest excitement among the hunters.

At first no game was seen, except the wild hog of the country, which in hundreds arose from their resting-places, ran hither and thither confusedly among the crowd,—sometimes upsetting and seriously wounding a man or two; or a timid deer occasionally, unable to escape up the sides and terrified by the din, tried to

break the line and perished in the attempt. Innumerable pea-fowl arose, and with loud screaming flew onwards, or alighted upon the sides of the glen and thus escaped; and birds of every plumage darted from tree to tree; large flocks of parroquets flew screaming into the air, and after wheeling rapidly once or twice alighted further on, or rising high took at once a flight over the shoulder of the glen and disappeared.

At length two huge black bears were roused from their den among some rocks which overhung the little stream, and with loud roars, which were heard by all, strove to pass through the line; they were met by the swords and shields of fifty men upon whom they rushed, and, though they strove gallantly for their lives and wounded several, they were cut to pieces.

The party had now proceeded about half way, and there was before the Sultaun's elephant a patch of dry rank grass which reached above its middle—even above old Hyder's, who far exceeded all the rest in height; it was of small extent, however, and was already half sur-

rounded by elephants with their gay howdahs and more gaily dressed riders.

"Hold!" cried the Sultaun, "we would try this alone, or with only a few; it is a likely place. Come, Khan, and you Meer Sahib, and you Syud Ghuffoor, see what ye can do to help us; now, Kasim Ali, prove to me that thou canst shoot—Bismilla!"

"Bismilla!" cried one and all, and the Mahouts urging on the noble beasts, they entered the long grass together. They had not gone many yards, when Hyder, who led, raised his white trunk high into the air, giving at the same time one of those low growls which proved there was something concealed before him. "Shabash, Hyder!" cried the Sultaun, "thou shalt eat goor for this; get on my son, get on!"

The noble beast seemed almost to understand him, for he quickened his pace even without the command of the Mahout. At that moment a rocket, discharged from the side, whizzed through the grass before them. The effect was instantaneous; two beautiful tigers arose at once. One of them stood for an instant, looking

proudly around him, and lashing his tail as he surveyed the line of elephants, several of which were restless and cowardly; the other tried to sneak off, but was stopped by a shot which turned him; and with a terrific roar, which sounded clear far above the din of the beaters, it charged the nearest elephant. It was beaten off however, receiving several shots, and was then followed by a crowd of the hunters.

Kasim and the Khan had a mind to pursue it too, but the former's attention was at once attracted to the Sultaun, who, having fired and wounded the other tiger, had been charged by it, and had just fired again; he had missed however, and the animal, excited to fury, had sprung at old Hyder—a far different foe to that his companion had attacked. Hyder had received the onset firmly, and as the tiger strove to fasten upon his shoulders had kicked him off; but at the second charge, when the Sultaun could not fire, the tiger had seized the elephant's leg, and was tearing it with all the energy of rage, which now defied his exertions to shake him off.

In vain did the Sultaun try to fire; he could

see the tiger only for a moment at a time, and as Hyder was no longer steady, he again missed his aim. Kasim was however near, and with others was anxiously watching his opportunity to fire; but ere he could do so, one of the men on foot, a stout brawny soldier, with sword drawn and his buckler on his arm, and to whom death had no terror in comparison with gaining distinction under the Sultaun's own eye, dashed at the tiger, and dealt him a fierce blow on the loins. The blood gushed forth, and the brute, instantly quitting his hold, turned upon the man with a roar which appalled all hearts; the latter met him manfully, but was unskilful, or the beast was too powerful. All was the work of an instant: the tiger and the man rolled upon the ground,—but only one arose; the lacerated and bleeding body of the brave fellow lay there, his features turned upwards to the sun, and his eyes fixed in the leaden stare of death. Now was Kasim's opportunity; as the tiger looked around him for an instant to make another spring—he fired; the brute reeled a few paces to the foot of the Sultaun's elephant, fell back, and his dying struggles were short-

ened by the vigorous kicks of the old elephant, who bandied the carcass between his legs like a football.

"Bus! bus! old Hyder," cried the Sultaun, who had been soundly shaken. "Enough! enough! he is dead—thanks to thy friend yonder;—what! not satisfied yet? Well, then, this to please thee," and he fired again. It was apparently sufficient, for the noble beast became once more composed.

While the Mahout* dismounted to examine the elephant's wounds, the Sultaun made some hurried inquiries regarding the man who had been killed. No one however knew him; so directing his body to be borne to the rear, and the Mahout having reported that there was no injury of consequence done to Hyder, the Sultaun, and with him the whole line, once more pressed forward.

As he passed Kasim, the Sultaun now greeted him heartily. "Thou didst me good service, youth," he cried; "but for thee my poor Hyder would have been sorely hurt. Enough—look sharp! there may be more work for thy gun yet."

* Elephant-driver.

So indeed there was: at every step, as they advanced, the quantity of game appeared to increase; another bear was aroused, and, after producing a vast deal of merriment and shouting, was slain as the former ones had been. Several hyænas were speared or shot; guns were discharged in all directions at the deer and hogs which were everywhere running about, and bullets were flying, much to the danger of those engaged in the wild and animated scene: indeed one or two men were severely wounded during the day.

Suddenly, when they had nearly reached the head of the glen, the Sultaun, who was leading, stopped; the others hastened after him, as fast as the thick crowd would allow, and all beheld a sight which raised their excitement to the utmost. Before them, on a small open spot, under a rock, close to the right side of the glen, stood three elephants; one a huge male, the others a female and her calf, of small stature.

No one spoke — all were breathless with anxiety; for it was impossible to say whether it would be advisable to attack the large elephant where he stood, or to allow him to advance.

The latter seemed to be the most prevalent opinion; and the Sultaun awaited his coming, while he hallooed to those in advance to urge him on. The noble monarch of the forest stood awaiting his foes—his brethren, who were thus trained to act against him. His small red eye twinkled with excitement; his looks were savage, and he appeared almost resolved upon a rush, to endeavour to break the line and escape, or perish. He did not move, but stood holding a twig in his trunk, as if in very excess of thought he had torn it down and still held it. However there was no time for consideration. As the Sultaun raised his gun to his shoulder several shots were fired, and the noble beast, impelled by rage and agony, rushed at once upon the nearest elephant among his enemies. A shower of balls met him, but he heeded them not: he was maddened, and could see or feel only his own revenge. In vain the Mahout of the elephant that was attacked strove to turn his beast, which had been suddenly paralyzed by fear; but the wild one appeared to have no revengeful feelings against his fellow. While they all looked on, without

being able to afford the least aid, the wild elephant had seized in his trunk the Mahout of the one he had attacked, wheeled him round high in the air, and dashed him upon the ground. A cry of horror burst from all present, and a volley of bullets were rained upon him; it had the effect of making him drop the body: but though sorely wounded, he did not fall, and retreating, he passed from their sight into the thick jungle.

"Pursue! pursue!" cried Tippoo from his elephant. "Ya Mahomed! are our beards to be defiled by such a brute? Inshalla! we will have him yet. A hundred rupees to him who shoots him dead."

The crowd hurried on: their excitement had reached almost a kind of madness; and the reward offered by the Sultaun, and the hope of his favour, had operated as a powerful stimulus. Every one scrambled to be first, horsemen and foot, and those who rode the elephants, all in confusion, and shouting more tumultuously than ever. All other game was disregarded in the superior excitement; even two panthers, who, roused at last, savagely charged everybody

and everything they came near, were hardly regarded, and were killed after a desperate battle by those in the rear. Those in the van still hurried on—the Sultaun leading, the Khan and Kasim as near to him as etiquette would allow, and the rest everywhere around them.

They were close to the top of the glen; the murmur of the fall could sometimes be heard when the shouting ceased for an instant, and its white and sparkling foam glistened through the branches of some noble teak-trees which stood around the little basin. The ground underneath them was quite clear, so that the elephants could advance easily.

"He is there—I see him!" cried the Sultaun, aiming at the wounded elephant, and firing. "Holy Alla, he comes! be ready—Fire!"

The noble animal came thundering on with his trunk uplifted, roaring fearfully, followed by two others, one a large female, who had a small calf with her, not larger than a buffalo; the other a male not nearly grown. It was a last and desperate effort to break the line; the blood was streaming from fifty wounds in his sides, and he was already weak: with that one effort he had hoped to have saved himself

and the female,—but in vain. As he came on, the Khan cried hurriedly to Kasim, "Above the eye! above the eye! you are sure of him there." He was met by a shower of balls, several of which hit him in the head. He seemed to stagger for a moment; his trunk, which had been raised high in the air, dropped, and he fell: his limbs quivered for an instant, and then he lay still in death. Kasim's bullet had been too truly aimed.

"Shabash, Shabash! he is dead!" shouted the Sultaun, wild with excitement; "now for the rest. Spare the young one; now for the female—beware, she will be savage!"

But she was not so at first; she retreated as far as the rock would allow her, and placing herself between her enemies and her calf, which, unconscious of danger, still strove to suck her milk, she tried to protect it from the shot, that hit her almost every time. Now and then she would utter low plaintive moans, which if those who fired at her possessed any feeling, would have pleaded with them to leave her unmolested. At times, goaded on by maddening pain, she charged the line, but only to be driven qack foiled and disheartened.

"Ya Alla!" cried Kasim, "will they not let her go free—she and the young one? Listen, Khan, to her moans. By the Prophet I will not fire—I cannot."

But the others continued the attack; and it was evident that she could not hold out much longer. She made one more desperate effort, but was beaten back by loud shouts and rockets; and her moans, and the cries of the calf, became more piteous than ever.

"For the sake of Alla put her out of pain!" said the Khan. "Aim now again just over the eye, in the temple; be steady, the shot is sure to kill. Now!—see they are going to fire again at her."

Kasim raised his unerring matchlock: the firing had ceased at the moment—all were loading. One sharp crack was heard, and the poor beast sank down without a moan or a struggle.

A crowd rushed forward to seize the calf, which was pushing its mother with its proboscis and head, as if to raise her up, uttering even more touching and piteous cries than ever. Alas! to no purpose. It had by a miracle

escaped the shower of balls, and was strong enough to give much trouble to its captors ere it was secured. The Sultaun, who had looked on in silence, now dismounted to examine it; and all his officers and courtiers, Mahomedan and Hindoo, followed his example. The scene was a striking one, as that splendidly dressed group stood beneath the shade of the noble teak-trees, by the waterfall and the clear stream which murmured over shining pebbles. Behind them was the rock, a sheer precipice of fifty feet, covered with flowers and creepers and beautiful mosses; by it lay the dead female, and near her the male elephant, whose length some were measuring and registering.

Already more than one had tried the temper of his sword upon the dead elephant's carcass, and the Sultaun stepped forward to see the exercise, which requires a strong and steady hand, and a fair cut, or the sword would bend or break.

Many had performed the feat with various success—none better than our friend Kasim; and many others were awaiting their turn, when

the young elephant, bound and secured, was brought before the Sultaun. Instantly it appeared to Kasim that his eye lighted up with the same cruel expression he had once or twice noticed, and his countenance to appear as if a sudden thought had struck him.

"Bind it fast!" he cried to the attendants, "tie it so that it cannot move." For the poor thing was bleating and crying out loudly at its rude usage, while its innocent face and tremblings expressed terror most strongly. The order was obeyed,—it was bound with ropes to two adjacent trees.

"Now," cried the Sultaun, looking around him proudly, and drawing his light but keen blade, "by the blessing of the Prophet we are counted to have some skill in our Qusrut—let us prove it!" So saying, and while a shudder at the cruelty of the act ran round the circle, and the Hindoos present trembled at the impiety, he bared his arm, and advancing, poised himself on one foot, while the glittering blade was uplifted above his head. At last it descended; but being weakly aimed, the back of the poor beast yielded to the blow, while it

screamed with the pain. Almost human was that scream! The Sultaun tried again and again, losing temper at every blow, but with no better success.

"Curse on the blade!" he cried, throwing it upon the ground; "it is not sharp enough, or we should have cut the beast in two pieces at a blow." Several stepped forward and offered their swords; he took one, and looked around —his eye was full of wanton mischief. "Now Ramah Seit!" he cried to a portly Hindoo banker who was near, "thou shalt try."

"May I be your sacrifice," said the banker, joining his hands, and advancing terror-stricken, "your slave is no soldier; he never used a sword in his life."

"Peace!" exclaimed the Sultaun, stamping on the ground, "dost thou dare to disobey? Take the sword, O son of perdition, and strike for thy life, else it shall be worse for thee."

"But your slave is a Hindoo," urged the trembling banker, "to whom shedding the blood of an elephant is damnable."

"It is right it should be so," cried Tippoo, whose most dangerous passion, bigotry, was

instantly aroused by the speech; "what say ye, my friends? this is a kafir, an enemy of the true faith; why should he not be made to help himself on to perdition?" and he laughed a low, chuckling, brutal laugh, which many remembered long after.

"A wise speech! Ah rare words! Whose speech is like the Sultaun's?" cried most of those around; "let him obey orders or die!"

"Therefore take the sword, most holy Sahoukar," continued the Sultaun with mock politeness, "and strike thy best."

The poor man, in very dread of his life, which indeed had been little worth had he disobeyed, —advanced and made a feeble stroke, amidst many protestations of want of skill. His excuses were received with shouts of laughter and derision by the ribald soldiery, who with many of his flatterers now surrounded the Sultaun and urged him on. The man was forced to repeat the blow many times, nor was there a Hindoo present who was not compelled to take a part in the inhuman barbarity.

Why dwell on the scene further? The miserable animal was hacked at by the strong

and by the weak,—bleating and moaning the while in tones of pain and agony, which grew fainter and fainter, until death released it from its tormentors. Then only did the Sultaun remount his elephant; and the human tiger, sated for that day with blood, hunted no more.

"By Alla and his prophet!" said Kasim to the Khan as they returned, and unable any longer to keep his indignant silence, "should there be a repetition of this, I vow to thee I will forswear his service. This is the second instance I have seen of his cruelty: hast thou forgotten the bull?"

"I have not," said the Khan; "I well remember it; but this is the worst thing he has ever done, and is the effect of the refusal of the marriage. He is ever thus after being violently provoked; but it is much if Alla does not repay him for it with reverses—we shall see."

Their horses were at the entrance of the glen, and alighting from their elephant, they mounted them, and rode on towards the camp, which, with its innumerable white tents, could be seen from the elevated ground on which they

then stood, at about two miles distant, backed by the blue distance and the noble range of the Neelgherry mountains. Here and there groves of date- or palm-trees studded the plain, and in places were seen dense jungles, between which were open patches of cultivation, and little villages with their white temples or mosques. The thousands who had come out for the sport were now returning, some in crowds together, singing a wild song in chorus, others in smaller groups chatting upon the events of the day. Here and there was a palankeen, its bearers crying their monotonous song as they moved, bearing to the camp either some one too indolent or too grand to ride on horseback, or else the fair inhabitant of the Sultaun's or some other harem, who had been allowed to see as much as was possible of the amusement of the royal hunt.

"That is surely the Khanum's palankeen," said Kasim, as its well-known appearance met his view at a turn of the road.

"Yes," said the Khan, "she has been dull of late, and I begged her to come out; she could have seen nothing, however, and 'tis well

she could not, for that butchery was horrible. Bah! how the creature bleated!"

"I wish it had not been, Khan, but there is no use speaking of it now. But how is it that the Khanum is unattended in such a crowd as this? some loocha* or shoda* might insult her, or say something disagreeable."

"By the Prophet, well remarked—the horsemen must have lost her; let us ride up and see." They urged their horses into a canter, and were soon with her.

"How is this?" cried the Khan to the Naik of the bearers; "how comes it that thou art alone?"

"Khodawund!" replied the man, "we lost the escort, and so thought we had better return by ourselves, for we knew not where to look for them in such a crowd."

"We had better stay by the palankeen ourselves, Khan Sahib," said Kasim; and Ameena well remembered the tones of his voice, though she had not heard it for some months; "it is not safe that the lady should be here alone."

* Disreputable fellow.

"Be it so then, Kasim; we will not leave her."

In a few minutes, however, the Sultaun, who they thought was before, but who had lingered behind to shoot deer, advanced rapidly on horseback at the head of the brilliant group of his officers;—a gay sight were they, as the afternoon sun glanced from spear and sword, from shield, matchlock and steel cap, and from their fluttering scarfs of gay colours and gold and silver tissue. A band of spearmen, bearing the heavy broad-bladed spears of the Carnatic ornamented with gay tassels, preceded him, calling out his titles in extravagant terms, and running at their full speed. Behind him was the crowd of officers and attendants, checking their gaily-caparisoned and plunging horses; and quite in the rear, followed the whole of the elephants, their bells jingling in a confused clash, and urged on by their drivers at their fullest speed to keep pace with the horses. The Sultaun sat his beautiful grey Arab with the ease and grace of a practised cavalier, now checking the ardent creature and nearly throwing him backwards, now urging him on to make

bounds and leaps, which showed how admirably he had been taught his paces, and displayed his own and his rider's figure to the best advantage.

"By Alla 'tis a gallant sight, Kasim!" said the Khan; for they had drawn up to one side, as the cavalcade came thundering on over a level and open spot, to let it pass; "looking at them, a soldier's eye glistens and his heart swells; does not thine do so? Look out, my pearl!" he cried to Ameena; "veil thyself and look out—the Sultaun comes."

"My heart beats," said Kasim, "but not as it would were he who rides yonder a man whom I could love as well as fear."

"Inshalla!" cried the Khan, "thou wilt forget today's work ere long, and then thou wilt love the Lion of the Faith, the terrible in war, even as I do. Inshalla! what Sultaun is there on the earth like him, the favoured of Alla, before whom the infidels are as chaff in the wind? But see, he beckons to me; so remain thou with the Khanum, and bring her into camp." And so saying, the Khan gave the rein to his impatient charger, and bounded

onwards to meet the Sultaun, who appeared to welcome him kindly. Kasim saw the Khan draw up beside him, joining his hands as if speaking to him; and as the wild and glittering group hurried by, horses and elephants intermingled, he lost sight of him among the crowd, and the cavalcade rapidly disappeared behind a grove of trees.

And now she, who for many months had often filled his dreams by night, and been the almost constant companion of his thoughts by day, was alone with him. He had seen her fair and tiny hand shut the door of the palankeen, which was an impenetrable screen to his longing eyes; and he would have given anything he possessed for one glance—to have heard one word, though he dared not have spoken to her.

And in truth, the thoughts of the fair inmate of the vehicle, which was being borne along at the utmost speed of the bearers, were busied also in a variety of speculations upon her young guardian. Did he remember her still? had he still the handkerchief with which his wound had been bound? for he had never returned it.

Did he remember how she handed him matchlock after matchlock, to fire upon the wild Mahrattas, and cried with the rest Shabash! when they said his aim was true? She had not forgotten the most trivial incident; for her heart, in the lack of society, had brooded on these occurrences; they were associated too, in her youthful mind, with the appearance of one so noble and gallant, of whom she heard such constant and florid encomiums from the Khan her husband, that it would have been strange had she not dwelt on this remembrance with more than friendship for the author of them. But the current of these thoughts—when his noble figure was present to her imagination—as he had dashed on hotly in pursuit of the Mahrattas,—was suddenly and rudely interrupted by a hubbub, the reason of which she could not at first comprehend.

The bearers were proceeding rapidly, when, at a turning of the cross road which they had taken for shortness, they perceived an elephant, one of the royal procession, which, either maddened by the excitement of the hunt, or goaded to desperation by its driver,

was running hither and thither upon the road in the wildest manner. The Mahout repeatedly drove his sharp ankoos* into its lacerated head; but this appeared to enrage, and make it the more restive, instead of compelling it to go forward, as was evidently his wish.

The bearers stopped suddenly, and appeared irresolute; to attempt to pass the infuriated animal was madness, and yet what to do immediately was difficult to determine, for the road was bounded by a thick and impenetrable hedge of the prickly pear. It was in vain that Kasim shouted to the Mahout to go on, for he did not immediately comprehend the cause of the elephant's behaviour; the obstinate beast could not be moved in the direction required—it was impossible to force him through the hedge, and it was frightful to see his behaviour, and to hear the wild screams and trumpetings he uttered when struck with the sharp goad. Kasim saw there was danger, but he had little time for thought; he however drew his sword, and had just or-

* Pointed goads with which elephants are driven.

dered the bearers to retreat behind the corner, when the elephant, which by a sudden turn had seen what was behind, uplifted its trunk, and with a loud cry dashed forward.

Kasim was brave and cool; and yet there was something so frightful in the desperate rush of the maddened animal, that his heart almost failed him; nor could he discover whether it was himself or the palankeen that was the object of the elephant's attack; but he had confidence in the activity of his horse,—his sword was in his hand, and he little feared for himself. The elephant's advance was instantaneous; Kasim saw the palankeen was his object, and dashing forward almost as he reached it, he struck with his whole force at the brute's trunk, which was just within reach. The blow and pain turned the animal from his purpose, but his huge bulk grazed the palankeen, which, with its terrified bearers, fell heavily and rudely to the ground, and rolled upon its side.

Kasim heard the scream of Ameena (who had been unable to discover the cause of the alarm, and was afraid to open the door) the

moment the shock was given, and throwing himself from his horse he hurried to her assistance, for he was certain she must be severely hurt. This was no time for ceremony; in an instant the palankeen was set upright, the door opened, and seeing the fair girl lying, as he thought, senseless within, he cried out for water, while he supported her inanimate figure, and poured forth a torrent of passionate exclamations which he could not restrain.

But no water was there to be had, and it was fortunate that the lady had received no serious injury; she was stunned and extremely terrified; but a few moments of rest, and the consciousness of Kasim's presence, revived her. Instantly a thought of her situation, and her own modesty, caused her to cover herself hurriedly with her veil, which had become disarranged; and, not daring to look upon Kasim, whose incoherent inquiries were sounding in her ears, she implored him in a few broken sentences to leave her, and to have her carried onwards. He obeyed, though he would have given worlds to have heard her voice longer, broken and agitated as it was; he withdrew

sadly, yet respectfully ; and the danger being past—for the elephant had fled madly down the road by which they had come—they pursued their way to the camp.

CHAPTER XIII.

"But he saw my face—he must have seen it," cried Ameena; as, after relating the adventure to her lord, she was lying upon the soft cushions which had been spread for her. "I was not sensible, and he thought I must be hurt. Ah what wilt thou not think of me, my lord!" And she hid her burning face in her hands upon the pillow.

"What matter, fairest?" replied the Khan, as, bending over her with much concern in his countenance, he parted the hair upon her forehead and kissed it tenderly. "What matter? had it been another, indeed, who had opened thy palankeen, the officious rascal should have paid dearly for his temerity: but Kasim—why should it concern thee? did he not save thy

life? and is he not my friend? and now again have we not cause to be thankful to him? Let this not distress thee therefore, but praise Alla, as I do, that thou art safe."

It was not however the simple gaze of Kasim upon her face that had disturbed the agitated girl, though in confessing this to her lord she sought ease from other thoughts which were engrossing her. He had seen her face; happy were it if that had been the only result of the accident! but the passionate words which in his anxiety for her he had uttered, had fallen upon her ears, and but too readily accorded with her own previous thoughts; she remembered, too, as she looked around with returning consciousness after the shock, how she had seen his expressive eyes, lighted up with enthusiasm and anxiety, gazing on her; and she had read in them, even had he not spoken, that he loved her. And when she repeated to her husband again and again that Kasim had looked upon her face, that was all she dared to tell him of what had happened.

Poor Ameena! the Khan's constant theme of conversation had been Kasim Ali, as from

time to time any new feat of arms, of horsemanship, any new weapon or gay dress he had worn, attracted his attention; he would delight to relate all to her minutely, to recount how adroitly he had foiled such an one, how handsome he had looked, and to dwell upon these themes with expressions of praise and satisfaction at Kasim's daily proving himself more and more worthy of his patronage. Often would he foretell an exalted station for the young man, from the Sultaun's early selection of him to fulfil so delicate a mission as that to Hyderabad; and on that very day, when he had been beckoned by the Sultaun, it was to hear the praises of Kasim Ali, to be asked whether it was not he who had won the reward he had offered; and, upon his answering in the affirmative, the Sultaun had graciously bidden him bring Kasim to the morning Durbar, when he should be enrolled once more among his personal attendants.

Ameena was obliged to listen to all this; and after listening, she would brood over these discourses upon his noble qualities, until her heart grew sick at the thought that to *her* none

such would ever be—and her dearest hopes, for one to love her in whom should be united all those qualities which she heard he possessed, had long ago been blighted for ever. She needed no new event to remind her of Kasim's first service, nor to impress more strongly upon her mind his noble but melancholy features; which, except when lighted up by the hot excitement of battle, habitually wore a sad expression. And yet the last adventure had come, like the first, unsought and unexpected, and the consequences were sad to both. In Ameena, producing an inward shame, a consciousness of harbouring thoughts she dared not reveal—a vain striving between her honour to her lord and her love for the young man his friend. In Kasim, a burning passion—which, as it exists in Asiatics is almost irrepressible—struggling with his high feelings of rectitude, of respect, nay of affection for him he served, which was hardly to be endured.

And thus it continued, producing misery in both; except in forgetfulness, there was indeed no alleviation; and that was impossible, for they thought of little else than of each other,

through the long hours of the days and nights which followed.

The Sultaun had ordered the Khan to bring Kasim Ali before him in the morning after the usual march; but it was in vain that his messengers sought him, to apprise him of the order; he had been seen to ride off after the arrival of the Khanum, and was not to be found. In truth, the young man felt himself unable to meet the Khan with any composure after what had happened, and he also dreaded (if Ameena had heard the expressions he uttered) that she was offended. He had no possible means of ascertaining this—of imploring her not to denounce him to the Khan, as faithless and treacherous; and under the influence of these mingled and agitating feelings, the young man continued to ride hither and thither as if without a purpose—now in some level spot urging his horse into a furious gallop, to gain release from the thoughts which almost maddened him—again allowing him to walk slowly, while he brooded over the exquisite beauty and gentleness of her whom he had twice saved from injury, perhaps from destruction.

But the hour for evening prayer drew nigh, and he turned his horse towards the camp: its many fires were everywhere twinkling upon the fast darkening plain, and the deep sounds of the evening kettle-drums, mingled with the dull and distant murmur of thousands of voices, were borne clearly upon the evening wind.

He quickened his pace, and as the sonorous and musical voices of the Muezzins among the army, proclaiming the Azan*, called the faithful into their various groups for prayer, he rode up to the Khan's tent, where the usual number had their carpets spread, and awaited the proper moment for commencement. Kasim joined them, but the act of supplication had little effect in quieting his agitation; the idea that Ameena might have told all that had passed, precluded every other thought, and caused a feeling of apprehension, from which he could not release himself.

When the prayer was ended, the Khan addressed him in his usual kind and hearty manner, and calling him into his private tent, poured out his thanks, and those of Ameena, for his

* Call to prayer.

timely and gallant assistance in her late extreme danger. As he spoke, Kasim at once saw there was no cause for suspicion; and as the dread of detection passed from his heart, a feeling of tumultuous joy, that his words had not been ill received by her to whom he had addressed them, on the instant filled its place, and for awhile disturbed those high principles which hitherto had been the rule of his conduct.

"And now," said the Khan, after he had fairly overwhelmed the young man with thanks, "I have news, and good news for thee! thou art ordered to attend the morning Durbar, and I suspect for thy good. The Sultaun (may his condescension increase!) has looked once more with an eye of favour upon thee; he means to give thee a command among his guards, and to attach thee to his person. I shall lose thee therefore, Kasim, but thou wilt ever find me as sincere and devoted a friend as thou hast hitherto done. We may soon be separated, but so long as we march thus day after day, indeed so long as this campaign continues, we may at least associate together as we have been accustomed to do."

Kasim could hardly reply intelligibly to the Khan's kind expressions. That he had been exerting his influence with the Sultaun on his account, he could have no doubt; and this, with the affectionate friendship he had professed, again very powerfully brought all the young man's best feelings to his aid, and he went from his presence late in the evening, with a determination to seek Ameena no more, and if possible to drive all concern for her from his heart. Vain thought! Away from the Khan, his excited imagination still dwelt upon her, and his visions of their mutual happiness that night almost appeared to him an earnest that they would be ultimately realized.

He accompanied the Khan as usual during the march, for the army proceeded the next morning on its way, and at its early close he rode with him to the place where the Sultaun held his morning Durbar, in some anxiety as to what would happen. The tents of the monarch had not been pitched, for under the thick shade of some enormous tamarind-trees there was found ample space for the assembly; and pillows had been placed, and soft carpets

spread for his reception. One by one the different leaders and officers of rank arrived, and dismounting ranged themselves about the place which had been set apart for the Sultaun: their gay dresses somewhat sobered in colour by the deep shade the trees cast upon them, and contrasting powerfully with the green foliage, which descended in heavy masses close to the ground. On the outskirts of the spot the grooms led about their chargers, whose loud and impatient neighings resounded through the grove. On one side the busy camp could be seen, as division after division of horse and foot arrived in turn, and took up their ground in regular order.

At last the Sultaun's kettle-drums were heard, and in a few minutes he galloped up at the head of a crowd of attendants, and immediately dismounting advanced into the centre of the group, and returned the low obeisances of those who hastened to offer them. There were a few reports to be listened to, one or two summary and fearful punishments to be inflicted; and these done, the Sultaun turned to Rhyman Khan, who stood near him.

"Where is the young man?" he said; "we have thought much of him during the night, and our dreams have confirmed the previous visions we have mentioned regarding him. Therefore let him be brought, we would fain do justice in his case: this is a fortunate day and hour, as we have read by the stars; and the planetary influences are propitious."

Kasim was at hand, and amidst the crowd of courtiers, sycophants, and parasites, who would have given all they possessed to have been so noticed, he advanced, performed the Tusleemât, and then stood with his hands folded in an attitude of humility and attention.

"Youth!" cried the Sultaun, "we have heard that it was thou who killed the mad elephant yesterday, when our royal hand trembled and our gun missed fire. We offered a reward for that deed—dost thou claim it?"

"May I be your sacrifice!" replied Kasim, "I know not; what can I say?—let the Khan answer for me."

"He has already told me all," cried the Sultaun, "therefore we have sent for thee. Hear, then, and reflect on what we say to thee. Thou

shalt be raised higher than thou wast before, and we will arrange thy pay hereafter. It will be thy business to attend on and accompany us; and in the coming battles, in which by the aid of the Prophet we intend to eclipse our former achievements, which are known to all—"

Here he looked around, and cries of "Wonderful! The Sultaun is great and valiant! he eats mountains and drinks rivers! before his eye the livers of his enemies melt into water!" passed from mouth to mouth.

"Therefore," he continued, after a pause, "do thy service well and boldly, and it shall be good for thee that thou hast eaten the salt of Tippoo. Thou art Jemadar from this time forth, O Kasim Ali! and hear all of ye that it is so ordered."

The congratulations of all fell upon the gladdened ears of the young Patél, who, in truth, as he bowed lowly and fell back among the crowd, was somewhat bewildered by his new honour, so great and so unexpected. Now he should rank with the men of consequence,—nay, he was one himself; and he felt, as was natural, proud and elated at his promotion.

The Khan's joy knew no bounds. "I thought," he said, "thou wouldst be taken into favour, and have thy pay increased, but this is most excellent. By Alla! Kasim, say or think what thou wilt, the Sultaun has a rare discrimination. Wilt thou *now* forget the scene of yesterday, and the young elephant?"

"I shall never forget it," said Kasim, "but I pray Alla it may never be repeated."

"Ameen!" responded the Khan; "yet listen—the Sultaun speaks."

And the voice of the Sultaun was again heard, interrupting the Khan. "Proclaim silence!" he cried to the attendants; and after the loud cries of "Khamoosh! khamoosh!" had in some degree subsided, he addressed the assembled officers, whose number was every moment increased by other wild and martial figures from the camp, who crowded behind the rest on tiptoe to hear his address.

"Ye all know," he said, "how the infidel Rajah of Travancore—who has his portion already with the accursed—has allowed our rebellious and infidel subjects the Nairs to have shelter in his territory. We have demanded

them from him, and have met with insult and scorn in his replies; are we, who are the chosen of Alla, to bear this patiently?"

"Let him die! let him be sent to hell!" cried the assembly with one voice, their passions suddenly aroused by this abrupt address.

"Stay!" continued Tippoo—his visage becoming inflamed, and his eye glistening like that of a tiger's, chafing into fury—"we, by the favour of Alla, possess accurate knowledge of the councils of the unbelievers and of the kafir English. We know that this miserable Rajah is upheld by them in his contumacy; but we have ere now humbled their pride. Baillie and Mathews, with their hosts—where are they? and we will, Inshalla! humble them again, and drive them into the sea. They have threatened us with war if we attack the wall which this Rajah hath built upon our subjects' territory, and over which we have a right to pass to Cochin, whither it is our pleasure to go. Say, therefore, my friends, shall there be peace? Shall we, who wear swords on our thighs, eat dirt at the hands of these lying and damnable kafirs? or shall—"

The remainder of his speech was lost. The cry for war was as one voice. He had appealed to the fierce passions of his officers, who saw only victory in prospect, and they had responded as warmly as he could wish.

"Be it so," cried the Sultaun, when the tumult was stilled; "in a few days we shall see this wonderful wall, of which we hear things that would produce terror in any mind less strong or valiant than our own; and then, Inshalla-ta-Alla! we will see what can be done by the army of the Government, which is the gift of Alla, led by him who is an apostle sent to scourge all kafirs and sceptics. You have your dismissal now;—go, and prepare your men for this service. Mashalla! victory awaits our footsteps."

In a few days afterwards the army arrived within sight of the wall; it was of considerable height and thickness, had a broad and deep ditch in front, and presented a formidable obstacle to the invading army. It is probable that, had Tippoo attacked the wall at once, he might have carried it by escalade; but he was evidently uncertain as to the result of his nego-

tiations; he hesitated for a time to strike a blow which must inevitably embroil him with the English, and therefore drew off a short distance to the northward; where, engaged in correspondence with the English and Travancore Governments, he passed most of his time, thus allowing his enemy every opportunity to increase his force and prepare for resistance.

Kasim's post near the Sultaun's person led him into daily and close communication with the monarch, and he gradually gained an insight into his extraordinary character. Sometimes, when he uttered the noblest and loftiest sentiments of honour, he would love and respect him; again, some frivolous or ridiculous idea would get possession of his imagination, and drive him into the commission of a thousand absurdities and terrible cruelties. It was no uncommon thing to see beyond the precincts of the camp a row of miserable Hindoos hanging upon trees, who had defied the Sultaun's efforts at conversion, and had preferred death rather than change the religion of their fathers. For Shekh Jaffur, had arrived in

camp with a division of the army which was ordered to join from the Canarese provinces, where he had been particularly active against the Nairs; and to him Tippoo delegated the direction of the torture and punishment of those Hindoos, whom, on the slightest pretext, either of rebellion, disobedience or denial of supplies, they could get into their hands. With this duty Kasim Ali had no concern; but he observed that under the other it flourished, and that day after day some wretched beings were dragged before the monarch, whose death appeared to stay his appetite for slaughter till the negotiation should end, as he expected, by his letting loose his army upon the defenders of Travancore.

But month after month passed, and the season was advancing; the immense preparations of the English, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas, to join in one common league for his destruction were everywhere reported; it was necessary for him to strike some blow, else, after the preparations he had made and the threats he had promulgated, his conduct would appear in a weak and puerile light to his enemies.

To Kasim Ali this state of inactivity was insupportable; he had hoped from the Sultaun's address that the army would at once have been led to battle, and he was disappointed beyond expression, when, after a trifling skirmish before the wall, the whole drew off to that ground it was destined to occupy for so long. Instead of active employment in the field, in the excitement of which he might for the time forget Ameena, or strengthen his resolution to think no more of her with love,—there was absolute stagnation.

The life he led was entirely the opposite of what he wished it, and during the days of idleness and inactivity he had little else to do than dream of her. But he refrained from seeking her, even when opportunity was afforded by the return of his old friend the cook Zoolficar, who, having been left at Seringapatam by the Khan, had been sent for upon the misconduct and discharge of the one he had brought with him.

His arrival was heartily welcomed both by the Khan and Ameena; by the first, because he could once more enjoy his excellent cookery

and most favourite concoctions; by the lady, because his sister, the old servant of her family at Hyderabad, who had joined the worthy functionary at Seringapatam, accompanied him to the camp. She was gladly welcomed by Ameena, who, among the women that attended upon her, had no one to whom she cared to open her heart; for they were all natives of the south, with whom she had little communion of thought and feeling, and who spoke her language indifferently.

With Meeran, however, almost a new existence commenced; while alone the most part of the day—when the Khan's duties and attendance upon the Sultaun kept him away from her—she had few occupations except her own thoughts, which were sad enough; yet in Meeran's society, humble though she was, she could ever find topics of conversation—of her home, her family, her friends and acquaintance; old subjects long gone by were revived and dwelt upon with all the zest of fresh occurrences; and the incidents of her travel to the city, and every event connected with herself since she left her home, were repeated again

and again with that minuteness which is commonly the result of a want of other occupation.

It hardly needed the very quick penetration common to a woman whose wits had been sharpened by a residence in such a city as Hyderabad, to discover very soon that her young and beautiful mistress was unhappy; and Meeran heard so often of the young Patél, as Ameena still called him, and found that she so evidently delighted to speak of him and his acts, that she very naturally concluded that much of her unhappiness was attributable to the young man, however innocent he might be of the cause. For, after speaking of him, and describing his noble appearance as she had seen it on several occasions, and repeating the constant eulogiums of her lord, Ameena would often involuntarily find a tear starting to her eye, or a deep-drawn sigh heave forth, which she fain would have suppressed but could not.

Now Meeran had from the first, and while there was yet a chance of averting the evil, protested against the giving away of her child (for so she called Ameena) to a man as old as

the Khan for a sum of money; and though she had every respect for him, yet she could see no harm, after a little consideration and the overcoming a few scruples, of striving to help the lovers. She had nursed Ameena at her own breast, she had tended her from infancy, had been the confidant of all her secrets, and, if the truth were known, had helped the young girl to form exactly such an idea of a lover as it appeared Kasim was—young, gallant, handsome, and of a fine generous temper.

Kasim had renewed his acquaintance with the good-natured Zoolficar, and on several occasions the man had come to his little tent upon one excuse or another; sometimes to talk over their journey, sometimes to cook him a dish he liked, when the Khan was employed elsewhere, and they did not dine together. Often had their conversation fallen upon Ameena; and though at first the mention of her name had been avoided by the young Jemadar, yet the theme was so pleasant a one that he insensibly dwelt upon it more and more. Soon Kasim heard from the cook that his sister was with his young mistress, and that she was happier in

the society of her old nurse than she had been before her arrival.

Habitual indulgence in conversation about her naturally begat a craving in the young man to know all the particulars of Ameena's daily existence. The most trifling circumstances appeared to be welcome to him; and it was not long ere Zoolficar, finding that he could not give the information so greedily looked for as minutely as was required, proposed that his sister should supply it. This, however pleasant, was nevertheless a matter of more difficulty, and one that required concealment; for it would have been at once fatal to Ameena's reputation, had her favourite servant been seen in private conversation with one like Kasim Ali. Despite of obstacles, however, they contrived to meet; and on the first of these interviews the nurse saw clearly enough how passionately devoted Kasim was to her fair mistress, and how precious to him was every detail of her life, of her meek and gentle temper, and of her loving disposition. The nurse would often bewail her unhappy destiny, in being cut off from all chance of real happiness in company

with the Khan: and she could appreciate, from the evident agitation of the young man, and his half-suppressed exclamations, how difficult it was for him to withhold an open declaration of his thoughts. Yet she could not help seeing that through all this there was nothing breathed of dishonour to the Khan, no wish to meet her whom she was sure he so passionately loved.

It was not until after some time and many such conversations with the young Jemadar, that Meeran dared to mention to Ameena that she had seen him. She had heard from Kasim the account of his protection of her from the enraged elephant, and he had confessed what he had then uttered.

"She knows of his love, then," said Meeran mentally, "and she dares not mention it to her old nurse. We shall see whether this humour will last long. Inshalla! they shall be yet happy in each other's society."

She could not appreciate the nice morality either of Kasim or her young mistress: she knew that neither was happy, and believed she had in her power the means of making both

so. "Could they but meet," she used to say, "they might speak to each other, and even half the words that I hear, spoken by one to the other, would set their hearts at rest for ever."

But Ameena grew really angry with the woman, that she had dared to think of such a step, much less to speak of it. Meeran bore all good-humouredly, but she determined to persevere, convinced that she was acting for their mutual good.

Time passed on; the army advanced nearer to the wall, and at length the Sultaun, tired of inactivity or protracted negotiation, determined to strike the first blow in the strife, which it was useless to disguise to himself wa fast approaching; and could he but possess himself of Travancore, his operations against the English would be materially aided. His resolution was, however, suddenly and unexpectedly made. Kasim with some men had been directed to examine a part of the defence where the wall joined a precipice, some miles from the camp, and to report the practicability of its assault. His statement confirmed the Sultaun's previous intentions, and he gave

orders for the attacking parties—ten thousand of the flower of his army—to prepare for immediate action.

Kasim was aware that his post would be one of danger, for the Sultaun was determined to lead the attack in person, and it was more than probable that he would be bravely opposed by the defenders of the lines; among these were many of the fugitive Nairs, who burned for an opportunity of revenging upon the Sultaun's army the many insults and oppressions they had suffered.

Much, however, was hoped from so powerful an attack on an undefended point; and the Sultaun's order was delivered to the army on the afternoon of Kasim's report. The divisions for the assault were ordered under arms after evening prayer, and all were in readiness, and exulting that ere that time on the morrow the barrier before them would be overcome, and the dominions of their enemy open to plunder.

The night was bright and clear and cool: there was no wind, and the melancholy and shrill notes of the collery horn came up

sharp upon the ear from all parts of the wall before them, which extended for miles on either side. Lights were twinkling here and there upon it, showing that the watchers did not sleep, and sometimes the flash and report of a musket or matchlock appeared or was heard, fired by one or other of the parties. The camp of the Sultaun was alive with preparation, and the busy hum of men arose high into the still air. Soon all was completed; and when it was no longer doubtful that darkness veiled their preparations, the mass of men moved slowly out of the camp, and led by Kasim took their way to the place he had discovered.

CHAPTER XIV.

The huge column moved slowly and silently onwards, aided by the light of a brilliant moon. The Sultaun, at its head, sometimes on foot, at others on horseback, or in bad places upon his elephant, cheered on his men and officers with words he knew would best arouse their zeal and spirit. There was hardly need however, for the army proceeded as fast as the nature of the ground would permit. All night they marched, but slowly enough, through the narrow and rugged road, and sometimes through the thick jungles; and often the Sultaun would turn to Kasim, and question him about the path, evidently thinking that he had lost it,

and that the expedition would be in vain. But the young Jemadar was sure of the way; the guides he had taken with him when he explored the path in the first instance were also confident; and as morning broke, the dull grey light disclosed the precipitous rock which was their object, close before them.

"Art thou sure this is the place, Kasim Ali?" said the Sultaun, as he rode backwards and forwards, vainly endeavouring to find the path which led to the summit. "Art thou sure? By the Prophet it will be worse for thee if thou hast led us wrong!"

"May I be your sacrifice," said Kasim, "this is the place. Let the army halt here for a short time; your slave will take a few of the pioneers and see if it be clear of the enemy; but it is not probable they would defend it, so far from the gate, and in this wild jungle."

"I will accompany thee," replied the Sultaun; and despite the entreaties of the numerous officers by whom he was surrounded, he rode after Kasim. A strong body of infantry supported them in case of danger.

There was however none: the path, which

was concealed from view by a large tree, and ran up between two high rocks, was undefended. A few men might have disputed it against a host, but the Sultaun's threatening disposition of troops in front of the gate, which was many miles distant, had drawn all the defenders to that spot; and where the wall terminated against the rock there was no one left to guard it.

Accompanied by a few of the household slaves, sword in hand, Kasim advanced slowly and cautiously up the path. There was perfect silence, except when a jungle fowl, scared from its roost by the unusual sound of men's feet, flew with a loud whirr into the dense thickets beyond the pass; or when the ravens, aroused from the trees below, flew before them from bush to bush, croaking their dismal welcome to the feast they seemed to anticipate.

They gained the top without interruption; and Kasim, sending word to the Sultaun (who had not ventured with the leading party up the pass) that all was safe, went on to the edge of the precipice, and looked over the scene before him.

The night mists still lay quietly in the hollows, looking like unruffled lakes in the dim light; and here and there a huge rock, like the one on which he stood, was surrounded by them, and appeared like an island. Immediately below him all was clear, and the long columns and crowds of persons—the elephants moving majestically about, and horsemen here and there appearing where the jungle was thin or open—was a sight at which the young soldier's blood danced briskly through his veins; for all were now pressing forward towards the pass, and he hoped that the leading divisions would soon be at the summit. Away to the left, the line of wall, with its bastions and towers, which so long had been their object of desire, stretched over the undulating ground; but it was deserted, except at a distant point, where two or three faintly twinkling lights showed that a watch was kept.

"By the Prophet, thy road is a rare one, Kasim Ali!" said the Sultaun, who had come up to him unobserved, and touched his shoulder; "the army will soon be up, though it is some-

what narrow. Dost thou see any one stirring on the wall?"

"No one, my lord; they have all been deceived by the troops before the gate, and imagine the attack is to be made there."

"Yes," said the Sultaun, "we are unrivaled in such stratagems; it was ourself who planned the ambuscade which ended in the discomfiture of Baillie and his kafirs; and we have ever exercised the talent which Alla hath confided to us, among many others, of military skill, in which we surpass the English and French—may their races be defiled!"

How long the Sultaun might have continued the theme of his own praises, which was always a most pleasant one to him, it is impossible to say, but his harangue was rather rudely interrupted by two shots, discharged in quick succession from a distant part of the wall before them, one of which whistled over their heads (for they were standing upon the crest of the rock)—the other struck the ground a little below them.

"Ha! so the rogues are awake," cried Kasim; "I beseech you, my lord, to turn back,

and not to expose yourself to danger. Your slave will lead the way, and send these infidels to perdition."

"Inshalla!" cried the Sultaun, yielding to the solicitations of all around him and retiring a few paces, "Inshalla! many will see the angel of death ere night. On with ye! victory is before—cry Alla Yar! and set on them. Think that ye fight for the faith, and that your Sultaun is beholding your deeds of prowess."

"Alla Yar! Deen! Deen!" was now shouted by the hoarse voices of the crowd which occupied the top of the rock, and the cry flew from division to division down the pass and into the plain; thousands shouted "Alla Yar! Alla Yar!" the Sultaun's war-cry, and strained every nerve to press onwards.

The shout of the army was answered by several single shots from the same spot as before; and an officer of the regular infantry, who had been standing on the very brink of the precipitous rock, was seen to toss his arms wildly into the air, and, ere he could be caught by several who rushed to his assistance, had fallen headlong into the thicket below.

"Follow Kasim Ali Patél!" cried the daring young man—for he was the foremost, and the path was not at first apparent to the rest. Drawing his sword and putting his arm through the loops of his shield, he dashed down it, followed by a hundred of those who waited the signal of attack.

They scrambled down the side of the declivity on to the wall—there was nothing that could be called a path for soldiers—and it was still so dusk that objects could but ill be discerned. Once on the wall, however, all was fair before them: the parapet was broad enough for three or four men to pass abreast; but Kasim and the rest were obliged to wait awhile ere they were joined by a sufficient number to press on.

"We shall have hot work ere long," said the officer who had accompanied Kasim, "and this is no place for infantry to fight in—a narrow wall, with a deep ditch on the one hand, and a thick jungle, with only a narrow path through it on the other. By Alla I like it not."

"Art thou a coward?" said Kasim, turning on him with some contempt in his voice, "thou

hadst better in that case go to the rear. Fie on thee to speak thus! do we not eat the Sultaun's salt? Come on, in the name of the Prophet! there are enough of us—more are coming every moment, and the top of the rock is already crowded."

"Thou shalt see I am no coward," cried the officer, darting forward; but he was stopped by another deadly shot, and fell on his face without uttering a word or cry.

His fate did not, however, check the assault. "Alla Yar! Alla Yar!" was still the shout, and the whole body hurried on, impelled forward by the pressure from the rear. There was no retreating; on the one hand was the impassable ditch, on the other the jungle—here and there open, and with paths through it running parallel to the wall, by which many rapidly advanced. They saw nothing of the defenders, though from time to time a fatal shot struck the dense mass, and one of their number fell headlong from the narrow path, or sinking down wounded was thrown over by his comrades. The thick jungle hid the defenders of the wall, who retreated as the others advanced; for they were

as yet too few to offer any resistance. But gradually the noise of the shouting and firing was heard along the line of wall, and its defenders hurried along to the right to meet their enemies, judging that their flank had been turned, and that there was little hope of retaining their post if the Sultaun's army should succeed in advancing. In this manner parties joined together and gradually succeeded in arresting the rapid approach of their enemies, who had now to fight for every foot of ground. Tower after tower was desperately disputed; the day was advancing, many of the men were already exhausted by their long night march, and to stop or retreat was impossible.

"At this rate we shall never reach the gate," cried the Sultaun, who had entered a tower which had just been taken, and where Kasim and many others were taking breath for an instant ere they recommenced their advance. "We shall never gain the gate—it must now be nearly three coss from us;" and he looked from one to the other of those assembled.

"And the men are very weary," said Kasim, for he spoke boldly.

"Ya, Alla kureem!" exclaimed the Sultaun, "dost *thou* despair, Kasim Ali?"

"Alla forbid!" was his reply: "by the favour of the Prophet we shall prevail; but my lord sees that it is tedious work, for the kafirs have heard the firing and are collecting more and more in every tower; and though they pay dearly for their temerity in resisting the power of the Lion of the Faith, as these unblessed bodies testify, yet the taking of every succeeding tower is a work of more labour, and many of the faithful have tasted of death."

"A thought strikes me," said the Sultaun, "what if the wall were thrown down? we should then possess a breach, by which we could enter or go out at pleasure."

"A wise thought! Excellent advice! What great wisdom!" was repeated by the whole circle, while the Sultaun stood by silent, apparently in further consideration upon the subject.

"Yes," he continued, after holding his forefinger between his teeth in an attitude of deliberation for some time,—"yes, it is a good thought; and we charge you, Syud," he added, to his relative, "with its execution; collect the

pioneers, heave over the battlements into the ditch, fill it up level with the plain. Inshalla! there will be a broad road soon. Be quick about it; and now, sirs, let us lose no more time, but press on; our swords are hardly red with the blood of the infidels, and they appear to be collecting yonder in some force."

"But," said the Syud, "this is a pioneer's work: in the name of the Prophet leave me not with them."

"I have spoken," replied the Sultaun, frowning. "Enough! see my command obeyed, and be quick about it."

"We may need the road too soon," said a voice: but, although they tried hard, they could not discover whose it was.

Once more then they resolutely set forward, and the Sultaun was on foot among his men, who were full of animation as he often spoke to them, and reminded them that those who fell were martyrs, who would be translated to Paradise, and those who survived would win honour and renown. But it was easy to see that, tired and exhausted as they were, the men had not their first spirit; and some hours of constant

fighting, with no water to refresh them, had been more than they could support; the opposition every moment became more and more certain and effective, and each step was disputed.

Meanwhile the road over the ditch progressed but slowly. The Syud had thought himself offended by being left behind to see it done, and looked sulkily on without attempting to hasten the operation. The pioneers were too few to effect anything rapidly; indeed it would have been impossible to have done what the Sultaun had ordered, even had the whole force joined in the work; for the ditch was wide and deep, full of thorns, briars, matted creepers, and bamboos, which had been planted on purpose to offer a hindrance to an enemy. A few stones only had been displaced, though the work had gone on nearly an hour, when it was suddenly and rudely interrupted.

The advancing party had proceeded hardly half a mile, with much labour, when on a turn of the wall they perceived a square building filled with the enemy, who in considerable numbers had taken post there, and were evidently determined to dispute it hotly.

"Ah! had we now some of my good guns," cried the Sultaun, as he beheld their preparations for defence, "we would soon dislodge those unblessed kafirs. By Alla they have a gun too! there must be some one yonder who understands fighting better than those we have yet seen."

"May their mothers be defiled!" cried a gasconading commander of a battalion of infantry, who was well known for his boasting. "Who are they that dare oppose us? my men are fresh," (for they had just come up from the rear) "and if I am ordered I will go and bring the fellow's head who is pointing the gun yonder."

"Ameen!" said the Sultaun, quietly; "be it so—thou hast volunteered—go! Stir not thou, Kasim Ali, but remain here; we may require thee."

The officer addressed his men for a few moments, formed them as compactly as he could on the narrow wall, and placing himself at their head, with loud cries of "Alla, Yar!" they dashed on, followed by many who had collected during the pause. Those in the enclosure reserved their fire till they were near.

"They have no ammunition," cried the Sultaun; "Ya Fukr-oo-deen! Ya Nathur Wullee! I vow a covering for both your tombs if they take the place." But as he made the invocation, they saw (for all were looking from the tower where they had staid in intense eagerness) one of the men inside the enclosure lift a match to the gun, and apply it;—it would not ignite.

"Ya Futteh-O!" cried Kasim, snatching a matchlock from a fellow who stood near, and aiming; "it is a long shot, but Bismilla!" and he fired.

The man was raising his hand again when the shot struck him; he fell back into the arms of those behind him.

"Another, for the sake of the Prophet, or it will be too late!" cried Kasim, not heeding the cries of "Shabash! Shabash!" which all poured forth.

It was indeed too late; the success of the first shot had gained the advancing party a moment, but ere he could be sure of his aim a second time, the fatal match was applied, and with the explosion half of the leading division fell as one man.

"May perdition light on them!" cried the Sultaun in agony; "may hell be their portion! My men waver too. Ya Kubeer! Ya Alla kureem! Support them—Ya Mahomed!—against the infidels!"

But his wild invocations were of no use; the commander of the party had fallen; and the men, having fired a volley at random, turned and fled as hastily as they could on that narrow crowded way.

"Cowards!" exclaimed Kasim. "Ah, had I here fifty of the youth of my country, and their good swords—Inshalla! we would see whether we were to eat this abomination."

The Sultaun was speechless with rage for some moments. "Order on the next corps!" he shouted at last; "that unworthy one shall be disgraced. Before my very eyes to behave thus! Do not stay to fire," he cried to its commander who came up; "upon them with the steel! were ye English, ye would carry the place—ye are of the true faith, will ye not fight better? Ya Karwa Owlea! Ya Baba Boodun! grant me your prayers."

"Let me head this attack," cried Kasim, for others appeared to hang back; "on my head

and eyes be it—I will carry the place or die in the effort."

"Remain here," exclaimed the Sultaun fiercely; "art thou too rebellious? remain and shoot if thou wilt, we may need thee. Let them go whose duty it is."

"Jo Hookum!" exclaimed the officer who had been addressed; "I will either carry it or die."

Again the advance was made, while those in the tower kept up an incessant fire, the Sultaun himself aiming frequently; but they had now to face men emboldened by success. The division was allowed to advance nearly to the same place as the former had done; and again the fatal cannon, loaded almost to the muzzle with grape, was fired. A loud shout from the enemy followed. The execution was terrible; the survivors hesitated for a moment, then turned and fled, leaving a heap of mangled and writhing forms between them and the enemy. At this moment too, a body of [illegible] an eminence on the flank, who had hitherto been concealed, poured in a destructive volley, which added to the terror. The retreating body met another

which was hurrying on to their assistance, and the confusion became irretrievable. Blows and bayonet-thrusts were even exchanged on the narrow wall, and many a man fell wounded or maimed by the hands of his fellow-soldiers, while only the powerful could keep possession of the passage. On a sudden arose a cry of "The road! the road!" and as if the means of escape were thus open, the whole, for a great distance down the wall, turned and fled.

The Sultaun saw the action; it was in vain that he tore his hair, threw his turban on the ground, raved, swore, implored the assistance of the Prophet and all the saints in one breath, and in the next wildly invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon his coward army. It was in vain that he threw himself, accompanied by Kasim and his personal attendants, into the crowd, and upon the narrow path strove to withstand the torrent which poured backwards. It was in vain that he shouted—screamed till he was hoarse: his voice was lost in the mighty hubbub, in the cries of thousands, the oaths, the groans, and rattle of musketry from behind.

It was in vain that, drawing his sword in despair, he cut fiercely at, and desperately wounded, many of the fugitives, and implored those around him to do the same. He was at last overpowered, and accompanied by Kasim and a few of the strongest of his slaves, he was borne on with the crowd. No one heeded him; in the *melée* he had lost his turban, by which he was usually known, and he became undistinguishable to his soldiery from one of themselves.

Thus it was that the throwing down of the wall was interrupted; the cry from the panic-stricken multitude, re-echoed by the advancing troops, rose almost instantaneously upon the air with a deafening sound. "The road! the road!" all shouted, and hurried to where they expected to have seen it completed. The narrow stream met from two opposite directions, pouring on, urged by the energy of despair from behind. The two extremes met; there was no time for thought — not a second; those who were first had hardly looked into the ditch, and seen there only a heap of stones instead of a road, and those thirty feet be-

low them, ere, with one wild cry to Alla, they were pushed into it by those behind, whose turn was to come next. A few there were —men of desperate strength—who clung to the battlements with the tenacity of despair; a few who, drawing their swords, turned and tried to cut their way through the mass. Vain effort! force was met by force, for the danger was not perceived till men were on the brink and were pushed over; those in the rear thought they had escaped, and no warning cry was heard, or, if heard, attended to or understood.

The multitude poured on. Ten thousand men had to pass by that place. Those who leaped, lay at the bottom, many maimed, others crushed and entangled amidst the thorny briars and thick grasses. The mass at the bottom of the ditch gradually increased; and a road arose, not of the ruins of the wall, but a mass of human bodies: those uppermost struggling in agony for life, those underneath already at rest in death,—a quiet foundation for the superincumbent structure.

The Sultaun and his companions were hurried on. Kasim had a dread of what he should

see—a sickening feeling, as the shrieks and imprecations which arose from that horrible spot fell upon his ear as they approached; they could do nothing however, for to turn was impossible; to leap from the walls into the midst of the enemy would have been death, for they pursued the flying army with exulting shouts, and pressed close upon the flanks and rear with their long spears. By the road there was a chance of life—a chance only—and that was clung to as a reality at that moment.

They reached the brink. "Way for the Sultaun!—aid the Sultaun!—rescue your king!" shouted Kasim with his utmost energy, while he dealt blows right and left, as did also the others with him, to stay the crowd even for an instant. The Sultaun looked down on the horrible heap, which, wildly agitated, was heaving with the convulsions of those beneath it; he appeared to turn sick and stagger, and Kasim observed it.

"For your life," cried he, "Lall Khan and some more of ye, keep together, or he is lost! Now leap with me!" and as the Sultaun still hesitated, Kasim seized him by the arm and threw himself from the brink.

Now began a fresh struggle—one for life or death, in which only the strongest prevailed. For an instant Kasim was stunned by the shock, but he saw Lall Khan trying to help on the Sultaun, whose features wore the hue of despair, and he made a mighty effort to aid him. The footing upon the heaving mass was unsteady and insecure; in the wild despair of death, the struggling beings below clung to the legs of those above them, and thus the weak were drawn down to destruction. But Kasim Ali and those who followed him were powerful men, and raising the almost senseless body of the Sultaun in their arms, and spurning many a feeble and exhausted wretch beneath their feet, they bore it with immense exertions across the ditch.

There remained, however, the counterscarp to surmount. Here many a man who had passed across the ditch failed to ascend, for it was of rock, and so rugged and inclining inwards as to afford no footing. It was vain attempting to raise the Sultaun to the top, without he made some exertion, and Kasim shouted his danger in his ear, while he pointed to the place. The Sultaun at last comprehended the peril, and

being raised by Kasim and the others on the shoulders of the tallest of his slaves, he twice essayed to mount the bank, and twice fell back among the writhing and crushed wretches at the foot, upon whom they were standing.

The second time he was raised he was evidently much hurt, and could not stand: what was to be done? Motioning to the others—for to speak was impossible—Kasim mounted by their aid to the top; and the Sultaun being once more lifted, was received by the young man, who supported him a few steps, and then laying him down, groaning heavily, he flew to the rescue of those who had so nobly aided him.

One by one they had ascended by his and their mutual aid, and the generous fellow had stretched his hand to several despairing wretches, who were weak with their efforts and previous fatigue, and rescued them from death; when, seeing the enemy now lining the wall and about to fire upon the bank opposite to where he stood, he turned away in order to remove the Sultaun, who still lay where he had placed him, out of danger. He had gone but

a few paces, when he heard a sharp discharge of matchlocks, and felt a cold stinging pain in his shoulder and all down his back: the next instant a deadly sickness, which precluded thought, overpowered his faculties, and he sank to the ground in utter insensibility.

END OF VOL. II.

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